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# NEW AND OLD ESSAYS

1820-1935

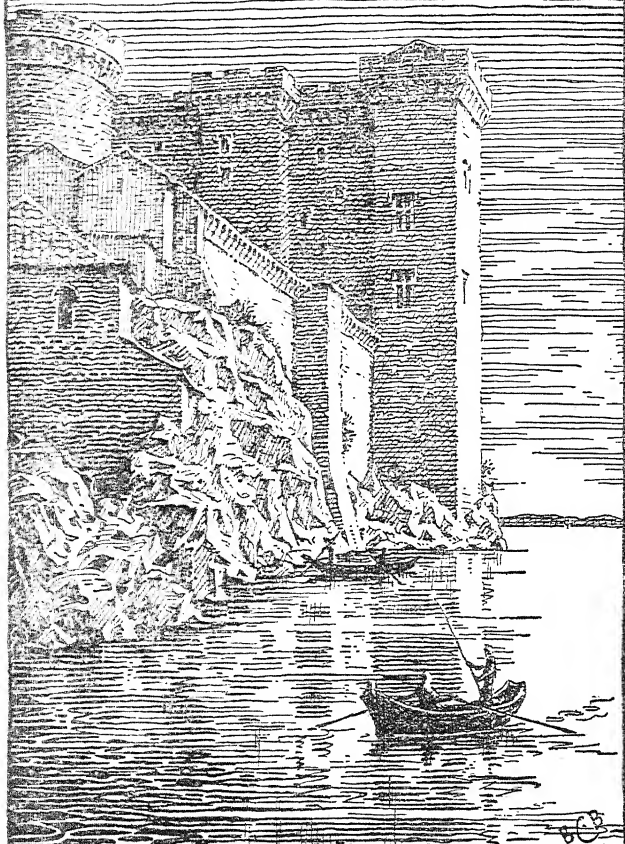
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KING RENÉ'S CHATEAU AT TARASCON




# NEW AND OLD ESSAYS

1820-1935

EDITED BY

R. W. JEPSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "CLEAR THINKING,"  
"ENGLISH GRAMMAR FOR TO-DAY," ETC.



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## INTRODUCTION

IN *The Art of Book-Making* Washington Irving, whose *Sketch Book* is perhaps better known for its pictures of English country life, takes us into the reading-room of the British Museum to see the "Book-Makers" at work. There is a geniality and charm about Irving's work, mingled with a trace of that irony and tolerant amusement to be expected in a visitor from the New to the Old World.

In *Grace Before Meat* a theme which, in less skilful hands, would have given rise to dull and heavy moralizing, is treated with a sprightliness, delicacy and disarming candour typical of the gentle Elia at his best.

"Lamb dances round a subject; Hazlitt grapples with it."<sup>1</sup> Part of Lamb's charm lies in his subtlety and whimsicality; Hazlitt is direct, vigorous and penetrating. Hazlitt's style is free from mannerisms, starch and frills; his arrangement is tidy, his construction four-square; yet he is never dull and he does not "date" like many of the older essayists. About his judgments on art, literature, and life there is a permanence that makes him readable with profit to-day. Those who know from painful experience what "temporary (or chronic) pecuniary embarrassment" means either in themselves or their acquaint-

<sup>1</sup> Birrell, *Obiter Dicta*.

ances will find in *On the Want of Money* their feelings faithfully, and racily, depicted.

Leigh Hunt, in *A Chapter on Hats*, with his light touch and sense of fun enables his readers to share his own enjoyment of "daily trifles and light fugitive things." John Brown, the physician-philosopher, is of sterner stuff; in *Happy Guessing* he analyses for us that elusive quality, presence of mind, and enlivens his discourse with apt anecdotes well told.

"If you would learn," says Q, "how Dickens learned to consolidate his style, study that neglected work of his, *The Uncommercial Traveller* . . . study them with Thackeray's *Roundabout Papers*, and tell me if these two great Victorian novelists . . . cannot match your Augustan essayists on their own ground." Read the two essays taken from these works—*City Churches* and *Ogres*—and judge for yourselves.

After the subtle and intricate character-studies in Henry James's novels, one can turn with relief to admire his skill in objective description and his polished and finished style in *Tarascon*, a sketch from his almost forgotten *Little Tour in France*.

The versatile Andrew Lang, with a fellow-poet's and fellow-countryman's sympathy, now begs us to reconsider the fashionable judgment on Sir Walter Scott's poems. Sir George Radford, whose friend Augustine Birrell included his essay on Falstaff among his own *Obiter Dicta*, reconstructs the early life of Shakespeare's immortal comic character, filling in the gaps of the records with "happy guessing."

Sir Leslie Stephen in *A Cynic's Apology* with no little skill justifies the existence and defends the usefulness of that gad-fly of Society and salutary corrective to precocities and enthusiasms. Samuel Butler in *Quis Desiderio* . . . ? finds in his loss of a musty tome on which to rest his books in the reading-room of the British Museum a parallel to Wordsworth's loss of Lucy and to the loss sustained by Thomas Moore's nameless young lady in the untimely and mysterious death of her dear gazelle; and he makes the most of his opportunities to indulge in some solemn fooling.

And so we come to the twentieth century. G. K. C. assumes his favourite rôle as counsel for the defendant; on this occasion the Detective Story is in the dock. If the modern hiker does not know his *Walker Miles*, Hugh Sidgwick's tribute will tempt him to explore the footpaths of Kent and Surrey in the steps of that classic guide.

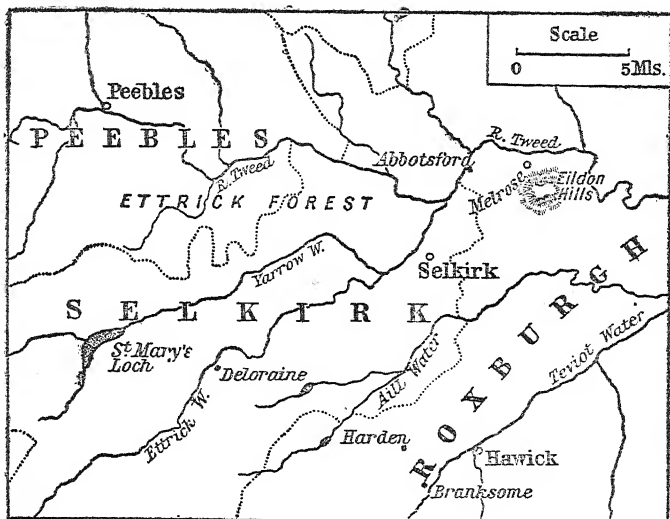
It is always a pleasure for the amateur to listen to the informal talk of the skilful workman (provided he is articulate) on the tools, materials and processes of his own craft. When the craft is *Expression*, and its medium the English language, and the craftsman is Galsworthy himself, then, if we are truly *amateurs*, our pleasure is a foregone conclusion. Ronald Knox has a reputation as a humorist and satirist—he also therefore speaks with some authority *On Humour and Satire*.

Not to end on a highbrow theme, we return to

## INTRODUCTION

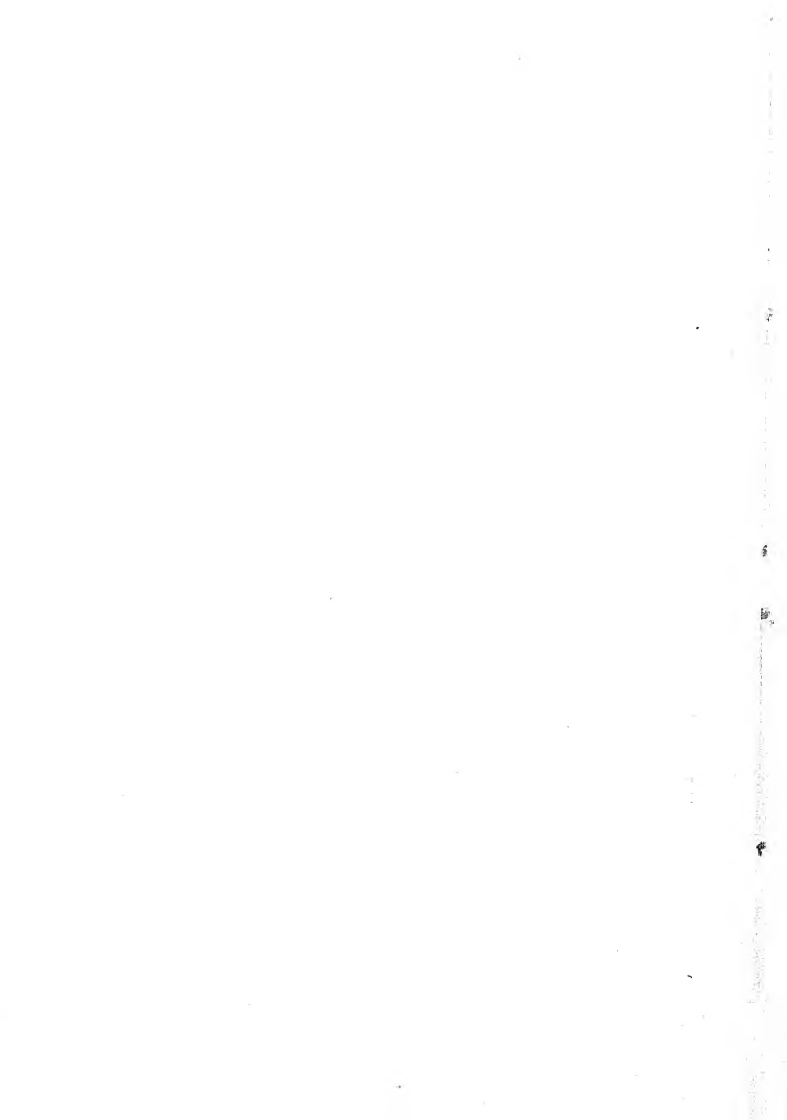
earth in the form of the English greensward, from which Edmund Blunden televises for us a moving picture of *An Ancient Holiday*—a game of village cricket.





THE BORDER COUNTRY

See page 246



## THE ART OF BOOK-MAKING

If that severe doom of Synesius be true—"It is a greater offence to steal dead men's labour than their clothes,"—what shall become of most writers?—BURTON'S "ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY."

I HAVE often wondered at the extreme fecundity of the press, and how it comes to pass that so many heads, on which nature seemed to have inflicted the curse of barrenness, should teem with voluminous productions. As a man travels on, however, in the journey of life, his objects of wonder daily diminish, and he is continually finding out some very simple cause for some great matter of marvel. Thus have I chanced, in my peregrinations about this great metropolis, to blunder upon a scene which unfolded to me some of the mysteries of the book-making craft, and at once put an end to my astonishment.

I was one summer's day loitering through the great saloons of the British Museum, with that listlessness with which one is apt to saunter about a museum in warm weather; sometimes lolling over the glass cases of minerals, sometimes studying the hieroglyphics on an Egyptian mummy, and sometimes trying, with nearly equal success, to comprehend the allegorical paintings on the lofty ceilings. Whilst I was gazing about in this idle way, my attention was attracted to a distant door, at the end of a suite of apartments. It was closed, but every now and then it would open,

and some strange-favoured being, generally clothed in black, would steal forth, and glide through the rooms, without noticing any of the surrounding objects. There was an air of mystery about this that piqued my languid curiosity, and I determined to attempt the passage of that strait, and to explore the unknown regions beyond. The door yielded to my hand, with that facility with which the portals of enchanted castles yield to the adventurous knight-errant. I found myself in a spacious chamber, surrounded with great cases of venerable books. Above the cases, and just under the cornice, were arranged a great number of black-looking portraits of ancient authors. About the room were placed long tables, with stands for reading and writing, at which sat many pale, studious personages, poring intently over dusty volumes, rummaging among mouldy manuscripts, and taking copious notes of their contents. A hushed stillness reigned through this mysterious apartment, excepting that you might hear the racing of pens over sheets of paper, or occasionally, the deep sigh of one of these sages, as he shifted his position to turn over the page of an old folio; doubtless arising from that hollowness and flatulency incident to learned research.

Now and then one of these personages would write something on a small slip of paper, and ring a bell, whereupon a familiar would appear, take the paper in profound silence, glide out of the room, and return shortly loaded with ponderous tomes, upon which the other would fall tooth and nail with famished voracity. I had no longer a doubt that I had happened upon a body of magi, deeply engaged in the study of occult sciences. The scene reminded me of an old Arabian tale, of a philosopher shut up in an

enchanted library, in the bosom of a mountain, which opened only once a year; where he made the spirits of the place bring him books of all kinds of dark knowledge, so that at the end of the year, when the magic portal once more swung open on its hinges, he issued forth so versed in forbidden lore, as to be able to soar above the heads of the multitude, and to control the powers of nature.

My curiosity being now fully aroused, I whispered to one of the familiars, as he was about to leave the room, and begged an interpretation of the strange scene before me. A few words were sufficient for the purpose. I found that these mysterious personages, whom I had mistaken for magi, were principally authors, and in the very act of manufacturing books. I was, in fact, in the reading-room of the great British Library—an immense collection of volumes of all ages and languages, many of which are now forgotten, and most of which are seldom read: one of these sequestered pools of obsolete literature, to which modern authors repair, and draw buckets full of classic lore, or “pure English, undefiled,” wherewith to swell their own scanty rills of thought.

Being now in possession of the secret, I sat down in a corner, and watched the process of this book manufactory. I noticed one lean, bilious-looking wight, who sought none but the most worm-eaten volumes, printed in black-letter. He was evidently constructing some work of profound erudition, that would be purchased by every man who wished to be thought learned, placed upon a conspicuous shelf of his library, or laid open upon his table, but never read. I observed him, now and then, draw a large fragment of biscuit out of his pocket, and gnaw; whether it was

dinner, or whether he was endeavouring to keep off that exhaustion of the stomach produced by much pondering over dry works, I leave to harder students than myself to determine.

There was one dapper little gentleman in bright-coloured clothes, with a chirping, gossiping expression of countenance, who had all the appearance of an author on good terms with his bookseller. After considering him attentively, I recognized in him a diligent getter-up of miscellaneous works, which bustled off well with the trade. I was curious to see how he manufactured his wares. He made more stir and show of business than any of the others; dipping into various books, fluttering over the leaves of manuscripts, taking a morsel out of one, a morsel out of another, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." The contents of his book seemed to be as heterogeneous as those of the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*. It was here a finger and there a thumb, toe of frog and blind-worm's sting, with his own gossip poured in like "baboon's blood," to make the medley "slab and good."

After all, thought I, may not this pilfering disposition be implanted in authors for wise purposes; may it not be the way in which Providence has taken care that the seeds of knowledge and wisdom shall be preserved from age to age, in spite of the inevitable decay of the works in which they were first produced? We see that nature has wisely, though whimsically, provided for the conveyance of seeds from clime to clime, in the maws of certain birds; so that animals which, in themselves, are little better than carrion, and apparently the lawless plunderers of the orchard and the cornfield, are, in fact, Nature's carriers, to

disperse and perpetuate her blessings. In like manner, the beauties and fine thoughts of ancient and obsolete authors are caught up by these flights of predatory writers, and cast forth again to flourish and bear fruit in a remote and distant tract of time. Many of their works, also, undergo a kind of metempsychosis, and spring up under new forms. What was formerly a ponderous history, revives in the shape of a romance—an old legend changes into a modern play—and a sober philosophical treatise furnishes the body for a whole series of bouncing and sparkling essays. Thus it is in the clearing of our American woodlands; where we burn down a forest of stately pines, a progeny of dwarf oaks start up in their place; and we never see the prostrate trunk of a tree mouldering into soil, but it gives birth to a whole tribe of fungi.

Let us not, then, lament over the decay and oblivion into which ancient writers descend; they do but submit to the great law of nature, which declares that all sublunary shapes of matter shall be limited in their duration, but which decrees, also, that their elements shall never perish. Generation after generation, both in animal and vegetable life, passes away, but the vital principle is transmitted to posterity, and the species continue to flourish. Thus, also, do authors beget authors, and having produced a numerous progeny, in a good old age they sleep with their fathers, that is to say, with the authors who preceded them, and from whom they had stolen.

Whilst I was indulging in these rambling fancies, I had leaned my head against a pile of reverend folios. Whether it was owing to the soporific emanations from these works; or to the profound quiet of the room; or to the lassitude arising from much wander-

ing; or to an unlucky habit of napping at improper times and places, with which I am grievously afflicted—so it was, that I fell into a doze. Still, however, my imagination continued busy, and indeed the same scene remained before my mind's eye, only a little changed in some of the details. I dreamt that the chamber was still decorated with the portraits of ancient authors, but that the number was increased. The long tables had disappeared, and, in place of the sage magi, I beheld a ragged, threadbare throng, such as may be seen plying about the great repository of cast-off clothes, Monmouth Street. Whenever they seized upon a book, by one of those incongruities common to dreams, methought it turned into a garment of foreign or antique fashion, with which they proceeded to equip themselves. I noticed, however, that no one pretended to clothe himself from any particular suit, but took a sleeve from one, a cape from another, a skirt from a third, thus decking himself out piecemeal, while some of his original rags would peep out from among his borrowed finery.

There was a portly, rosy, well-fed parson, whom I observed ogling several mouldy polemical writers through an eye-glass. He soon contrived to slip on the voluminous mantle of one of the old fathers, and, having purloined the grey beard of another, endeavoured to look exceedingly wise; but the smirking commonplace of his countenance set at naught all the trappings of wisdom. One sickly-looking gentleman was busied embroidering a very flimsy garment with gold thread, drawn out of several old court-dresses of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Another had trimmed himself magnificently from an illuminated manuscript, had stuck a nosegay in his bosom, culled from



*The Paradise of Daintie Devices*, and, having put Sir Philip Sidney's hat on one side of his head, strutted off with an exquisite air of vulgar elegance. A third, who was but of puny dimensions, had bolstered himself out bravely with the spoils from several obscure tracts of philosophy, so that he had a very imposing front; but he was lamentably tattered in rear, and I perceived that he had patched his small-clothes with scraps of parchment from a Latin author.

There were some well-dressed gentlemen, it is true, who only helped themselves to a gem or so, which sparkled among their own ornaments, without eclipsing them. Some, too, seemed to contemplate the costumes of the old writers, merely to imbibe their principles of taste, and to catch their air and spirit; but I grieve to say, that too many were apt to array themselves from top to toe, in the patchwork manner I have mentioned. I shall not omit to speak of one genius, in drab breeches and gaiters, and an Arcadian hat, who had a violent propensity to the pastoral, but whose rural wanderings had been confined to the classic haunts of Primrose Hill, and the solitudes of the Regent's Park. He had decked himself in wreaths and ribands from all the old pastoral poets, and, hanging his head on one side, went about with a fantastical lackadaisical air, "babbling about green fields." But the personage that most struck my attention was a pragmatistical old gentleman, in clerical robes, with a remarkably large and square, but bald head. He entered the room wheezing and puffing, elbowed his way through the throng, with a look of sturdy self-confidence, and, having laid hands upon a thick Greek quarto, clapped it upon his head, and

swept majestically away in a formidable frizzled wig.

In the height of this literary masquerade, a cry suddenly resounded from every side, of "Thieves! thieves!" I looked, and lo! the portraits about the wall became animated! The old authors thrust out, first a head, then a shoulder, from the canvas, looked down curiously, for an instant, upon the motley throng, and then descended, with fury in their eyes, to claim their rifled property. The scene of scampering and hubbub that ensued baffles all description. The unhappy culprits endeavoured in vain to escape with plunder. On one side might be seen half a dozen old monks, stripping a modern professor; on another, there was sad devastation carried into the ranks of modern dramatic writers. Beaumont and Fletcher, side by side, raged round the field like Castor and Pollux; and sturdy Ben Jonson enacted more wonders than when a volunteer with the army in Flanders. As to the dapper little compiler of farragos, mentioned some time since, he had arrayed himself in as many patches and colours as Harlequin, and there was as fierce a contention of claimants about him, as about the dead body of Patroclus. I was grieved to see many men, to whom I had been accustomed to look up with awe and reverence, fain to steal off with scarce a rag to cover their nakedness. Just then my eye was caught by the pragmatistical old gentleman in the Greek grizzled wig, who was scrambling away in sore affright with half a score of authors in full cry after him! They were close upon his haunches: in a twinkling off went his wig; at every turn some strip of raiment was peeled away; until in a few moments, from his domineering pomp, he shrunk into a little, pursy, "chopped bald shot," and made

his exit with only a few tags and rags fluttering at his back.

There was something so ludicrous in the catastrophe of this learned Theban, that I burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, which broke the whole illusion. The tumult and the scuffle were at an end. The chamber resumed its usual appearance. The old authors shrunk back into their picture-frames, and hung in shadowy solemnity along the walls. In short, I found myself wide awake in my corner, with the whole assemblage of book-worms gazing at me with astonishment. Nothing of the dream had been real but my burst of laughter, a sound never before heard in that grave sanctuary, and so abhorrent to the ears of wisdom, as to electrify the fraternity.

The librarian now stepped up to me, and demanded whether I had a card of admission. At first I did not comprehend him, but I soon found that the library was a kind of literary "preserve," subject to game-laws, and that no one must presume to hunt there without special licence and permission. In a word, I stood convicted of being an arrant poacher, and was glad to make a precipitate retreat, lest I should have a whole pack of authors let loose upon me.

WASHINGTON IRVING—*The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*

## GRACE BEFORE MEAT

THE custom of saying grace at meals had, probably, its origin in the early times of the world, and the hunter-state of man, when dinners were precarious things, and a full meal was something more than a common blessing: when a belly-full was a windfall, and looked like a special providence. In the shouts and triumphal songs with which, after a season of sharp abstinence, a lucky booty of deer's or goat's flesh would naturally be ushered home, existed, perhaps, the germ of the modern grace. It is not otherwise easy to be understood, why the blessing of food—the act of eating—should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it, distinct from that implied and silent gratitude with which we are expected to enter upon the enjoyment of the many other various gifts and good things of existence.

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the *Fairy Queen*?—but, the received ritual having prescribed these forms to the solitary ceremony of manducation, I shall confine my observations to the experience which I have

had of the grace, properly so called; commending my new scheme for extension to a niche in the grand philosophical, poetical, and perchance in part heretical, liturgy, now compiling by my friend Homo Humanus, for the use of a certain snug congregation of Utopian Rabelæian Christians, no matter where assembled.

The form then of the benediction before eating has its beauty at a poor man's table, or at the simple and unprovocative repasts of children. It is here that the grace becomes exceedingly graceful. The indigent man, who hardly knows whether he shall have a meal the next day or not, sits down to his fare with a present sense of the blessing, which can be but feebly acted by the rich, into whose minds the conception of wanting a dinner could never, but by some extreme theory, have entered. The proper end of food—the animal sustenance—is barely contemplated by them. The poor man's bread is his daily bread, literally his bread for the day. Their courses are perennial.

Again, the plainest diet seems the fittest to be preceded by the grace. That which is least stimulative to appetite, leaves the mind most free for foreign considerations. A man may feel thankful, heartily thankful, over a dish of plain mutton with turnips, and have leisure to reflect upon the ordinance and institution of eating; when he shall confess a perturbation of mind, inconsistent with the purposes of the grace, at the presence of venison or turtle. When I have sate (*a rarus hospes*) at rich men's tables, with the savoury soup and messes steaming up the nostrils, and moistening the lips of the guests with desire and a distracted choice, I have felt the introduction of

that ceremony to be unseasonable. With the ravenous orgasm upon you, it seems impertinent to interpose a religious sentiment. It is a confusion of purpose to mutter out praises from a mouth that waters. The heats of epicurism put out the gentle flame of devotion. The incense which rises round is pagan, and the belly-god intercepts it for his own. The very excess of the provision beyond the needs, takes away all sense of proportion between the end and means. The giver is veiled by his gifts. You are startled at the injustice of returning thanks—for what?—for having too much, while so many starve. It is to praise the Gods amiss.

I have observed this awkwardness felt, scarce consciously perhaps, by the good man who says the grace. I have seen it in clergymen and others—a sort of shame—a sense of the co-presence of circumstances which unhallow the blessing. After a devotional tone put on for a few seconds, how rapidly the speaker will fall into his common voice, helping himself or his neighbour, as if to get rid of some uneasy sensation of hypocrisy. Not that the good man was a hypocrite, or was not most conscientious in the discharge of the duty: but he felt in his inmost mind the incompatibility of the scene and the viands before him with the exercise of a calm and rational gratitude.

I hear somebody exclaim,—Would you have Christians sit down at table, like hogs to their troughs, without remembering the Giver?—no—I would have them sit down as Christians, remembering the Giver, and less like hogs. Or if their appetites must run riot, and they must pamper themselves with delicacies for which east and west are ransacked, I would have

them postpone their benediction to a fitter season, when appetite is laid; when the still small voice can be heard, and the reason of the grace returns—with temperate diet and restricted dishes. Gluttony and surfeiting are no proper occasions for thanksgiving. When Jeshurun waxed fat, we read that he kicked. Virgil knew the harpy-nature better, when he put into the mouth of Celæno anything but a blessing. We may be gratefully sensible of the deliciousness of some kinds of food beyond others, though that is a meaner and inferior gratitude: but the proper object of the grace is sustenance, not relishes; daily bread, not delicacies; the means of life, and not the means of pampering the carcass. With what frame or composure, I wonder, can a city chaplain pronounce his benediction at some great Hall feast, when he knows that his last concluding pious word—and that, in all probability, the sacred name which he preaches—is but the signal for so many impatient harpies to commence their foul orgies, with as little sense of true thankfulness (which is temperance) as those Virgilian fowl! It is well if the good man himself does not feel his devotions a little clouded, those foggy sensuous steams mingling with and polluting the pure altar sacrifice.

The severest satire upon full tables and surfeits is the banquet which Satan, in the "Paradise Regained," provides for a temptation in the wilderness:

A table richly spread in regal mode,  
 With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort  
 And savour; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,  
 In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,  
 Gris-amber-steamed; all fish from sea or shore,

Freshet or purling brook, for which was drained  
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.

The Tempter, I warrant you, thought these cates would go down without the commendatory preface of a benediction. They are like to be short graces where the devil plays the host.—I am afraid the poet wants his usual decorum in this place. Was he thinking of the old Roman luxury, or of a gaudy day at Cambridge? This was a temptation fitter for a Heliogabalus. The whole banquet is too civic and culinary, and the accompaniments altogether a profanation of that deep, abstracted, holy scene. The mighty artillery of sauces, which the cook-fiend conjures up, is out of proportion to the simple wants and plain hunger of the guest. He that disturbed him in his dreams, from his dreams might have been taught better. To the temperate fantasies of the famished Son of God, what sort of feasts presented themselves?—He dreamed indeed,

—— As appetite is wont to dream,  
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.

But what meats?—

Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,  
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks  
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,  
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what  
they brought;  
He saw the prophet also how he fled  
Into the desert, and how there he slept  
Under a juniper; then how awaked  
He found his supper on the coals prepared,



And by the angel was bid rise and eat,  
 And ate the second time after repose,  
 The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:  
 Sometimes, that with Elijah he partook,  
 Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Nothing in Milton is finelier fancied than these temperate dreams of the divine Hungerer. To which of these two visionary banquets, think you, would the introduction of what is called the grace have been most fitting and pertinent?

Theoretically I am no enemy to graces; but practically I own that (before meat especially) they seem to involve something awkward and unseasonable. Our appetites, of one or another kind, are excellent spurs to our reason, which might otherwise but feebly set about the great ends of preserving and continuing the species. They are fit blessings to be contemplated at a distance with a becoming gratitude: but the moment of appetite (the judicious reader will apprehend me) is, perhaps, the least fit season for that exercise. The Quakers, who go about their business, of every description, with more calmness than we, have more title to the use of these benedictory prefaces. I have always admired their silent grace, and the more because I have observed their applications to the meat and drink following to be less passionate and sensual than ours. They are neither gluttons nor wine-bibbers as a people. They eat, as a horse bolts his chopt hay, with indifference, calmness, and cleanly circumstances. They neither grease nor slop themselves. When I see a citizen in his bib and tucker, I cannot imagine it a surplice.

I am no Quaker at my food. I confess I am not

indifferent to the kinds of it. Those unctuous morsels of deer's flesh were not made to be received with dispassionate services. I hate a man who swallows it, affecting not to know what he is eating. I suspect his taste in higher matters. I shrink instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal. There is a physiognomical character in the tastes for food. C——<sup>1</sup> holds that a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings. I am not certain but he is right. With the decay of my first innocence, I confess a less and less relish daily for these innocuous cates. The whole vegetable tribe have lost their gust with me. Only I stick to asparagus, which still seems to inspire gentle thoughts. I am impatient and querulous under culinary disappointments, as to come home at the dinner hour, for instance, expecting some savoury mess, and to find one quite tasteless and sapidless. Butter ill melted—that commonest of kitchen failures—puts me beside my tenour. The author of the “Rambler” used to make inarticulate animal noises over a favourite food. Was this the music quite proper to be preceded by the grace? or would the pious man have done better to postpone his devotions to a season when the blessing might be contemplated with less perturbation? I quarrel with no man's tastes, nor would set my thin face against those excellent things, in their way, jollity and feasting. But as these exercises, however laudable, have little in them of grace or gracefulness, a man should be sure, before he ventures so to grace them, that while he is pretending his devotions otherwise, he is not secretly kissing his hand to some great fish—his Dagon—with a special con-

[<sup>1</sup> Coleridge.]

secreation of no ark but the fat tureen before him. Graces are the sweet preluding strains to the banquets of angels and children; to the roots and severer repasts of the Chartreuse; to the slender, but not slenderly acknowledged, refection of the poor and humble man: but at the heaped-up boards of the pampered and the luxurious they become of dissonant mood, less timed and tuned to the occasion, methinks, than the noise of those better befitting organs would be, which children hear tales of, at Hog's Norton. We sit too long at our meals, or are too curious in the study of them, or too disordered in our application to them, or engross too great a portion of these good things (which should be common) to our share, to be able with any grace to say grace. To be thankful for what we grasp exceeding our proportion is to add hypocrisy to injustice. A lurking sense of this truth is what makes the performance of this duty so cold and spiritless a service at most tables. In houses where the grace is as indispensable as the napkin, who has not seen that never settled question arise, as to *who shall say it*; while the good man of the house and the visitor clergyman, or some other guest belike of next authority from years or gravity, shall be bandying about the office between them as a matter of compliment, each of them not unwilling to shift the awkward burthen of an equivocal duty from his own shoulders?

I once drank tea in company with two Methodist divines of different persuasions, whom it was my fortune to introduce to each other for the first time that evening. Before the first cup was handed round, one of these reverend gentlemen put it to the other, with all due solemnity, whether he chose to *say any-*

## GRACE BEFORE MEAT

thing. It seems it is the custom with some sectaries to put up a short prayer before this meal also. His reverend brother did not at first quite apprehend him, but upon an explanation, with little less importance he made answer, that it was not a custom known in his church: in which courteous evasion the other acquiescing for good manners' sake, or in compliance with a weak brother, the supplementary or tea-grace was waived altogether. With what spirit might not Lucian have painted two priests, of *his* religion, playing into each other's hands the compliment of performing or omitting a sacrifice,—the hungry God meantime, doubtful of his incense, with expectant nostrils hovering over the two flamens, and (as between two stools) going away in the end without his supper.

A short form upon these occasions is felt to want reverence; a long one, I am afraid, cannot escape the charge of impertinence. I do not quite approve of the epigrammatic conciseness with which that equivocal wag (but my pleasant school-fellow) C. V. L.,<sup>1</sup> when importuned for a grace, used to inquire, first slyly leering down the table, "Is there no clergyman here?" significantly adding, "thank G——." Nor do I think our old form at school quite pertinent, where we were used to preface our bald bread and cheese suppers with a preamble, connecting with that humble blessing a recognition of benefits the most awful and overwhelming to the imagination which religion has to offer. *Non tunc illis erat locus*. I remember we were put to it to reconcile the phrase "good creatures," upon which the blessing rested, with the fare set before us, wilfully understanding

[<sup>1</sup> Charles Valentine le Grice.]

that expression in a low and animal sense,—till some-one recalled a legend, which told how in the golden days of Christ's, the young Hospitallers were wont to have smoking joints of roast meat upon their nightly boards, till some pious benefactor, commiserating the decencies, rather than the palates, of the children, commuted our flesh for garments, and gave us—*horresco referens*—trousers instead of mutton.

CHARLES LAMB—*The Essays of Elia.*

## ON THE WANT OF MONEY

It is hard to be without money. To get on without it is like travelling in a foreign country without a passport—you are stopped, suspected, and made ridiculous at every turn, besides being subjected to the most serious inconveniences. The want of money I here allude to is not altogether that which arises from absolute poverty—for where there is a downright absence of the common necessities of life, this must be remedied by incessant hard labour, and the least we can receive in return is a supply of our daily wants—but that uncertain, casual, precarious mode of existence, in which the temptation to spend remains after the means are exhausted, the want of money joined with the hope and possibility of getting it, the intermediate state of difficulty and suspense between the last guinea or shilling and the next that we may have the good luck to encounter. This gap, this unwelcome interval constantly recurring, however shabbily got over, is really full of many anxieties, misgivings, mortifications, meannesses, and deplorable embarrassments of every description. I may attempt (this Essay is not a fanciful speculation) to enlarge upon a few of them.

It is hard to go without one's dinner through sheer distress, but harder still to go without one's breakfast. Upon the strength of that first and aboriginal meal, one may muster courage to face the difficulties before one, and to dare the worst: but to be roused out of

one's warm bed, and perhaps a profound oblivion of care, with golden dreams (for poverty does not prevent golden dreams), and told there is nothing for breakfast, is cold comfort for which one's half-strung nerves are not prepared, and throws a damp upon the prospects of the day. It is a bad beginning. A man without a breakfast is a poor creature, unfit to go in search of one, to meet the frown of the world, or to borrow a shilling of a friend. He may beg at the corner of a street—nothing is too mean for the tone of his feelings—robbing on the highway is out of the question, as requiring too much courage, and some opinion of a man's self. It is, indeed, as old Fuller, or some worthy of that age, expresses it, "the heaviest stone which melancholy can throw at a man," to learn, the first thing after he rises in the morning, or even to be dunned with it in bed, that there is no loaf, tea, or butter in the house, and that the baker, the grocer, and buttermilk have refused to give any farther credit. This is taking one sadly at a disadvantage. It is striking at one's spirit and resolution in their very source,—the stomach—it is attacking one on the side of hunger and mortification at once; it is casting one into the very mire of humility and Slough of Despond. The worst is, to know what face to put upon the matter, what excuse to make to the servants, what answer to send to the tradespeople; whether to laugh it off, or be grave, or angry, or indifferent; in short, to know how to parry off an evil which you cannot help. What a luxury, what a God's-send in such a dilemma, to find a half-crown which had slipped through a hole in the lining of your waistcoat, a crumpled bank-note in your breeches-pocket, or a guinea clinking in the bottom of your trunk, which

had been thoughtlessly left there out of a former heap! Vain hope! Unfounded illusion! The experienced in such matters know better, and laugh in their sleeves at so improbable a suggestion. Not a corner, not a cranny, not a pocket, not a drawer has been left unrummaged, or has not been subjected over and over again to more than the strictness of a custom-house scrutiny. Not the slightest rustle of a piece of bank-paper, not the gentlest pressure of a piece of hard metal, but would have given notice of its hiding-place with electrical rapidity, long before, in such circumstances. All the variety of pecuniary resources, which form a legal tender in the current coin of the realm, are assuredly drained, exhausted to the last farthing before this time. But is there nothing in the house that one can turn to account? Is there not an old family-watch, or piece of plate, or a ring, or some worthless trinket that one could part with? nothing belonging to one's-self or a friend, that one could raise the wind upon, till something better turns up? At this moment an old-clothes man passes, and his deep, harsh tones sound like a premeditated insult on one's distress, and banish the thought of applying for his assistance, as one's eye glances furtively at an old hat or a great coat, hung up behind a closet-door. Humiliating contemplations! Miserable uncertainty! One hesitates, and the opportunity is gone by; for without one's breakfast, one has not the resolution to do any thing!—The late Mr. Sheridan was often reduced to this unpleasant predicament. Possibly he had little appetite for breakfast himself; but the servants complained bitterly on this head, and said that Mrs. Sheridan was sometimes kept waiting for a couple of hours, while they had to hunt through the



neighbourhood, and beat up for coffee, eggs, and French rolls. The same perplexity in this instance appears to have extended to the providing for the dinner: for so sharp-set were they, that to cut short a debate with a butcher's apprentice about leaving a leg of mutton without the money, the cook clapped it into the pot: the butcher's boy, probably used to such encounters, with equal coolness took it out again, and marched off with it in his tray in triumph. It required a man to be the author of *The School for Scandal*, to run the gauntlet of such disagreeable occurrences every hour of the day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, of the Opera House, used to say of Sheridan, that he could not pull off his hat to him in the street without its costing him fifty pounds; and if he stopped to speak to him, it was a hundred. No one could be a stronger instance than he was of what is called *living from hand to mouth*. He was always in want of money, though he received vast sums which he must have disbursed; and yet nobody can tell what became of them, for he paid nobody. He spent his wife's fortune (sixteen hundred pounds) in a six weeks' jaunt to Bath, and returned to town as poor as a rat. Whenever he and his son were invited out into the country, they always went in two post-chaises and four; he in one, and his son Tom following in another. This is the secret of those who live in a round of extravagance, and are at the same time always in debt and difficulty—they throw away all the ready money they get upon any new-fangled whim or project that comes in their way, and never think of paying off old scores, which of course accumulate to a dreadful amount. "Such gain the cap of him who makes them fine, yet keeps his book uncrossed." Sheridan once wanted to take Mrs. Sheridan a very handsome dress down into the country, and went to Barber and Nunn's to order it, saying he must have it by such a day, but promising they should have ready money. Mrs. Barber (I think it was) made answer that the time was short, but that ready money was a very charming thing, and that he should have it. Accordingly, at the time appointed she brought the dress, which came to five-and-twenty pounds, and it was sent in to Mr. Sheridan, who sent out a Mr. Grimm (one of his jackals) to say he admired it exceedingly and that he was sure Mrs. Sheridan

The going without a dinner is another of the miseries of wanting money, though one can bear up against this calamity better than the former, which really "blights the tender blossom and promise of the day." With one good meal, one may hold a

would be delighted with it, but he was sorry to have nothing under a hundred pound bank-note in the house. She said she had come provided for such an accident, and could give change for a hundred, two hundred, or five hundred pound note, if it were necessary. Grimm then went back to his principal for further instructions; who made an excuse that he had no stamped receipt by him. For this, Mrs. B. said she was also provided; she had brought one in her pocket. At each message, she could hear them laughing heartily in the next room, at the idea of having met with their match for once; and presently after, Sheridan came out in high good humour, and paid her the amount of her bill, in ten, five, and one pound notes. Once when a creditor brought him a bill for payment, which had often been presented before, and the man complained of its soiled and tattered state, and said he was quite ashamed to see it, "I'll tell you what I'd advise you to do with it, my friend," said Sheridan, "take it home, and write it upon *parchment*!" He once mounted a horse which a horse-dealer was showing off near a coffee-house at the bottom of St. James's Street, rode it to Tattersall's, and sold it, and walked quietly back to the spot from which he set out. The owner was furious, swore he would be the death of him; and, in a quarter of an hour afterwards they were seen sitting together over a bottle of wine in the coffee-house, the horse-jockey with the tears running down his face at Sheridan's jokes, and almost ready to hug him as an honest fellow. Sheridan's house and lobby were beset with duns every morning, who were told that Mr. Sheridan was not yet up, and shewn into the several rooms on each side of the entrance. As soon as he had breakfasted, he asked, "Are those doors all shut, John?" and, being assured they were, marched out very deliberately between them, to the astonishment of his self-invited guests, who soon found the bird was flown. I have heard one of his old city friends declare, that such was the effect of his frank, cordial manner, and insinuating eloquence, that he was always afraid to go to ask him for a debt of long standing, lest he should borrow twice as much. A play had been put off one night, or a favourite actor did not appear, and the audience demanded to have their money back again: but when they came to the door, they were told by the

parley with hunger and moralize upon temperance. One has time to turn one's-self and look about one—to "screw one's courage to the sticking-place," to graduate the scale of disappointment, and stave off appetite till supper-time. You gain time, and time in

check-takers there was none for them, for that Mr. Sheridan had been in the meantime, and had carried off all the money in the till. He used often to get the old cobbler who kept a stall under the ruins of Drury Lane to broil a beef-steak for him, and take their dinner together. On the night that Drury Lane was burnt down, Sheridan was in the House of Commons, making a speech, though he could hardly stand without leaning his hands on the table, and it was with some difficulty he was forced away, urging the plea, "What signified the concerns of a private individual, compared to the good of the State?" When he got to Covent Garden, he went into the Piazza Coffee-house, to steady himself with another bottle, and then strolled out to the end of the Piazza to look at the progress of the fire. Here he was accosted by Charles Kemble and Fawcett, who complimented him on the calmness with which he seemed to regard so great a loss. He declined this praise, and said: "Gentlemen, there are but three things in human life that in my opinion ought to disturb a wise man's patience. The first of these is bodily pain, and that (whatever the ancient stoics may have said to the contrary) is too much for any man to bear without flinching; this I have felt severely, and I know it to be the case. The second is the loss of a friend whom you have dearly loved; that, gentlemen, is a great evil: this I have also felt, and I know it to be too much for any man's fortitude. And the third is the consciousness of having done an unjust action. That, gentlemen, is a great evil, a very great evil, too much for any man to endure the reflection of; but that" (laying his hand upon his heart) "but that, thank God, I have never felt!" I have been told that these were nearly the very words, except that he appealed to the *mens conscia recti* very emphatically three or four times over, by an excellent authority, Mr. Mathews, the player, who was on the spot at the time,—a gentleman whom the public admire deservedly, but with whose real talents and nice discrimination of character his friends only are acquainted. Sheridan's reply to the watchman who had picked him up in the street, and who wanted to know who he was, "I am Mr. Wilberforce!" is well known, and shows that, however frequently he might be at a loss for money he never wanted wit!

this weather-cock world is everything. You may dine at two, or at six, or seven—as most convenient. You may in the meanwhile receive an invitation to dinner, or someone (not knowing how you are circumstanced) may send you a present of a haunch of venison or a brace of pheasants from the country, or a distant relation may die and leave you a legacy, or a patron may call and overwhelm you with his smiles and bounty,

“As kind as kings upon their coronation-day;”

or there is no saying what may happen. One may wait for dinner—breakfast admits of no delay, of no interval interposed between that and our first waking thoughts.<sup>1</sup> Besides, there are shifts and devices, shabby and mortifying enough, but still available in case of need. How many expedients are there in this great city, time out of mind and times without number, resorted to by the dilapidated and thrifty speculator, to get through this grand difficulty without utter failure! One may dive into a cellar, and dine on boiled beef and carrots for tenpence, with the knives and forks chained to the table, and jostled by greasy elbows that seem to make such a precaution not unnecessary (hunger is proof against indignity!)—or one may contrive to part with a superfluous article of wearing apparel, and carry home a mutton-chop and cook it in a garret; or one may drop in at a friend's at the dinner-hour, and be asked to stay or not; or one may walk out and take a turn in the Park, about the time, and return home to tea, so as at least to avoid the sting of the evil—the appearance

<sup>1</sup> In Scotland, it seems, the draught of ale or whiskey with which you commence the day, is emphatically called “taking your *morning*.”

of not having dined. You then have the laugh on your side, having deceived the gossips, and can submit to the want of a sumptuous repast without murmuring, having saved your pride, and made a virtue of necessity. I say all this may be done by a man without a family (for what business has a man without money with one?—See *English Malthus and Scotch Macculloch*)—and it is only my intention here to bring forward such instances of the want of money as are tolerable both in theory and practice. I once lived on coffee (as an experiment) for a fortnight together, while I was finishing the copy of a half-length portrait of a Manchester manufacturer, who died worth a plum. I rather slurred over the coat, which was a reddish brown, “of formal cut,” to receive my five guineas, with which I went to market myself, and dined on sausages and mashed potatoes, and while they were getting ready, and I could hear them hissing in the pan, read a volume of *Gil Blas*, containing the account of the fair Aurora. This was in the days of my youth. Gentle reader, do not smile! Neither Monsieur de Very, nor Louis XVIII, over an oyster-pâté, nor Apicius himself, ever understood the meaning of the word *luxury* better than I did at that moment! If the want of money has its drawbacks and disadvantages, it is not without its contrasts and counter-balancing effects, for which I fear nothing else can make us amends. Amelia’s *hashed mutton* is immortal; and there is something amusing, though carried to excess and caricature (which is very unusual with the author) in the contrivance of old Caleb, in *The Bride of Lammermuir*, for raising the wind at breakfast, dinner, and supper-time. I recollect a ludicrous instance of a disappointment in a dinner which

happened to a person of my acquaintance some years ago. He was not only poor but a very poor creature, as will be imagined. His wife had laid by fourpence (their whole remaining stock) to pay for the baking of a shoulder of mutton and potatoes, which they had in the house, and on her return home from some errand, she found he had expended it in purchasing a new string for a guitar. On this occasion a witty friend quoted the lines from Milton :

“ And ever against *eating* cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs ! ”

Defoe, in his *Life of Colonel Jack*, gives a striking picture of his young beggarly hero sitting with his companion for the first time in his life at a three-penny ordinary, and the delight with which he relished the hot smoking soup, and the airs with which he called about him—“and every time,” he says, “we called for bread, or beer, or whatever it might be, the waiter answered, ‘coming, gentlemen, coming;’ and this delighted me more than all the rest!” It was about this time, as the same pithy author expresses it, “the Colonel took upon him to wear a shirt!” Nothing can be finer than the whole of the feeling conveyed in the commencement of this novel, about wealth and finery from the immediate contrast of privation and poverty. One would think it a labour, like the Tower of Babel, to build up a beau and a fine gentleman about town. The little vagabond’s admiration of the old man at the banking-house, who sits surrounded by heaps of gold as if it were a dream or poetic vision, and his own eager anxious visits, day by day, to the hoard he had deposited in the hollow tree, are in the very foremost

style of truth and nature. See the same intense feeling expressed in Luke's address to his riches, in the *City Madam*, and in the extraordinary raptures of the "Spanish Rogue" in contemplating and hugging his ingots of pure gold and Spanish pieces of eight: to which Mr. Lamb has referred in excuse for the rhapsodies of some of our elder poets on this subject, which to our present more refined and tamer apprehensions sound like blasphemy.<sup>1</sup> In earlier times, before the diffusion of luxury, of knowledge, and other sources of enjoyment had become common, and acted as a diversion to the cravings of avarice, the passionate admiration, the idolatry, the hunger and thirst of wealth and all its precious symbols, was a kind of madness or hallucination, and Mammon was truly worshipped as a god!

It is among the miseries of the want of money, not to be able to pay your reckoning at an inn—or, if you have just enough to do that, to have nothing left for the waiter;—to be stopped at a turnpike gate, and forced to turn back;—not to venture to call a hackney-coach in a shower of rain—(when you have only one shilling left yourself, it is a *bore* to have it taken out of your pocket by a friend, who comes into your house eating peaches in a hot summer's-day, and desiring you to pay for the coach in which he visits you);—not to be able to purchase a lottery-ticket, by which you might make your fortune, and get out of all your difficulties;—or to find a letter lying for you at a country post-office, and not to have money in your pocket to free it, and be obliged to return for it the next day. The letter so unseasonably withheld may

<sup>1</sup> Shylock's lamentation over the loss of "his daughter and his ducats," is another case in point.

be supposed to contain money, and in this case there is a foretaste, a sort of actual possession taken through the thin folds of the paper and the wax, which in some measure indemnifies us for the delay: the bank-note, the post-bill seems to smile upon us, and shake hands through its prison bars;—or it may be a love-letter, and then the tantalization is at its height: to be deprived in this manner of the only consolation that can make us amends for the want of money, by this very want—to fancy you see the name—to try to get a peep at the hand-writing—to touch the seal, and yet not dare to break it open—is provoking indeed—the climax of amorous and gentlemanly distress. Players are sometimes reduced to great extremity, by the seizure of their scenes and dresses, or (what is called) *the property of the theatre*, which hinders them from acting; as authors are prevented from finishing a work, for want of money to buy the books necessary to be consulted on some material point or circumstance, in the progress of it. There is a set of poor devils, who live upon a printed *prospectus* of a work that never will be written, for which they solicit your name and half-a-crown. Decayed actresses take an annual benefit at one of the theatres; there are patriots who live upon periodical subscriptions, and critics who go about the country lecturing on poetry. I confess I envy none of these; but there are persons who, provided they can live, care not how they live—who are fond of display, even when it implies exposure; who court notoriety under every shape, and embrace the public with demonstrations of wantonness. There are genteel beggars, who send up a well-penned epistle requesting the loan of a shilling. Your snug bachelors and retired old-maids pretend they



can distinguish the knock of one of these at their door. I scarce know which I dislike the most—the patronage that affects to bring premature genius into notice, or that extends its piecemeal, formal charity towards it in its decline. I hate your Literary Funds, and Funds for Decayed Artists—they are corporations for the encouragement of meanness, pretence, and insolence. Of all people, I cannot tell how it is, but players appear to me the best able to do without money. They are a privileged class. If not exempt from the common calls of necessity and business, they are enabled “by their so potent art” to soar above them. As they make imaginary ills their own, real ones become imaginary, sit light upon them, and are thrown off with comparatively little trouble. Their life is theatrical—its various accidents are the shifting scenes of a play—rags and finery, tears and laughter, a mock-dinner or a real one, a crown of jewels or of straw, are to them nearly the same. I am sorry I cannot carry on this reasoning to actors who are past their prime. The gilding of their profession is then worn off, and shows the false metal beneath; vanity and hope (the props of their existence) have had their day; their former gaiety and carelessness serve as a foil to their present discouragements; and want and infirmities press upon them at once. “We know what we are,” as Ophelia says, “but we know not what we shall be.” A workhouse seems the last resort of poverty and distress—a *parish-pauper* is another name for all that is mean and to be deprecated in human existence. But that name is but an abstraction, an average term—“within that lowest deep, a lower deep may open to receive us.” I heard not long ago of a poor man, who had been for many years a respect-

able tradesman in London, and who was compelled to take shelter in one of those receptacles of age and wretchedness, and who said he could be contented with it—he had his regular meals, a nook in the chimney, and a coat to his back—but he was forced to lie three in a bed, and one of the three was out of his mind and crazy, and his great delight was, when the others fell asleep, to tweak their noses, and flourish his night-cap over their heads, so that they were obliged to lie awake, and hold him down between them. One should be quite mad to bear this. To what a point of insignificance may not human life dwindle! To what fine, agonizing threads will it not cling! Yet this man had been a lover in his youth, in a humble way, and still begins his letters to an old maid (his former flame), who sometimes comforts him by listening to his complaints, and treating him to a dish of weak tea, “MY DEAR MISS NANCY!”

Another of the greatest miseries of a want of money, is the tap of a dun at your door, or the previous silence when you expect it—the uneasy sense of shame at the approach of your tormentor; the wish to meet, and yet to shun the encounter; the disposition to bully, yet the fear of irritating; the real and the sham excuses; the submission to impertinence; the assurances of a speedy supply; the disingenuousness you practise on him and on yourself; the degradation in the eyes of others and your own. Oh! it is wretched to have to confront a just and oft-repeated demand, and to be without the means to satisfy it; to deceive the confidence that has been placed in you; to forfeit your credit; to be placed at the power of another, to be indebted to his lenity; to stand convicted of having played the knave or the fool; and to

have no way left to escape contempt but by incurring pity. The suddenly meeting a creditor on turning the corner of a street, whom you have been trying to avoid for months and had persuaded you were several hundred miles off, discomposes the features and shatters the nerves for some time. It is also a serious annoyance to be unable to repay a loan to a friend, who is in want of it—nor is it very pleasant to be so hard run, as to be induced to request a repayment. It is difficult to decide the preference between debts of honour and legal demands; both are bad enough, and almost a fair excuse for driving anyone into the hands of money-lenders—to whom an application, if successful, is accompanied with a sense of being in the vulture's gripe—a reflection akin to that of those who formerly sold themselves to the devil—or, if unsuccessful, is rendered doubly galling by the smooth, civil leer of cool contempt with which you are dismissed, as if they had escaped from your clutches—not you from theirs. If anything can be added to the mortification and distress arising from straitened circumstances, it is when vanity comes in to barb the dart of poverty—when you have a picture on which you had calculated, rejected from an exhibition, or a manuscript returned on your hands, or a tragedy damned, at the very instant when your cash and credit are at the lowest ebb. This forlorn and helpless feeling has reached its *acme* in the prison-scene in Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*, where his unfortunate hero has just dropped the Manager's letter from his hands, with the laconic answer written in it:—"Your play has been read, and won't do."<sup>1</sup> To feel poverty is bad; but to feel it with the additional sense of our

<sup>1</sup> It is provoking enough, and makes one look like a fool, to

incapacity to shake it off, and that we have not merit enough to retrieve our circumstances—and, instead of being held up to admiration, are exposed to persecution and insult—is the last stage of human infirmity. We have heard it remarked, that the most pathetic story in the world is that of Smollett's fine gentleman and lady in gaol, who have been roughly handled by the mob for some paltry attempt at raising the wind, and she exclaims in extenuation of the pitiful figure he cuts, "Ah! he was a fine fellow once!"

It is justly remarked by the poet, that poverty has no greater inconvenience attached to it than that of making men ridiculous. It not only has this disadvantage with respect to ourselves, but it often shows us others in a very contemptible point of view. People are not soured by misfortune, but by the reception they meet with in it. When we do not want assistance, everyone is ready to obtrude it on us, as if it were advice. If we do, they shun us instantly. They anticipate the increased demand on their sympathy or bounty, and escape from it as from a falling house. It is a mistake, however, that we court the society of the rich and prosperous, merely with a view to what we can get from them. We do so, because there is something in external rank and splendour that gratifies and imposes on the imagination; just as we prefer the company of those who are in good health and spirits to that of the sickly and hypochondriacal, or as we would rather converse with a beautiful woman than with an ugly one. I never knew but one man who would lend his money freely and fearlessly in spite of circumstances (if you were likely to pay him, receive a printed notice of a blank in the last lottery, with a postscript hoping for your future favours.

he grew peevish, and would pick a quarrel with you). I can only account for this from a certain sanguine buoyancy and magnificence of spirit, not deterred by distant consequences, or damped by untoward appearances. I have been told by those who shared of the same bounty, that it was not owing to generosity, but ostentation—if so, he kept his ostentation a secret from me, for I never received a hint or a look from which I could infer that I was not the lender, and he the person obliged. Neither was I expected to keep in the background or play an under-part. On the contrary, I was encouraged to do my best; my dormant faculties roused, the ease of my circumstances was on condition of the freedom and independence of my mind, my lucky hits were applauded, and I was paid to shine. I am not ashamed of such patronage as this, nor do I regret any circumstance relating to it but its termination. People endure existence even in Paris: the rows of chairs on the Boulevards are gay with smiles and dress: the saloons are brilliant; at the theatre there is Mademoiselle Mars—what is all this to me? After a certain period, we live only in the past. Give me back one single evening at Boxhill, after a stroll in the deep-empurpled woods, before Buonaparte was yet beaten, “with wine of attic taste,” when wit, beauty, friendship presided at the board! But no! Neither the time nor friends that are fled can be recalled!—Poverty is the test of sincerity, the touch-stone of civility. Even abroad, they treat you scurvily if your remittances do not arrive regularly, and though you have hitherto lived like a *Milord Anglais*. The want of money loses us friends not worth the keeping, mistresses who are naturally jilts or coquets; it cuts us out of society, to which dress

and equipage are the only introduction; and deprives us of a number of luxuries and advantages of which the only good is, that they can only belong to the possessors of a large fortune. Many people are wretched because they have not money to buy a fine horse, or to hire a fine house, or to keep a carriage, or to purchase a diamond necklace, or to go to a race-ball, or to give their servants new liveries. I cannot myself enter into all this. If I can *live to think, and think to live*, I am satisfied. Some want to possess pictures, others to collect libraries. All I wish is, sometimes, to see the one and read the other. Gray was mortified because he had not a hundred pounds to bid for a curious library; and the Duchess of — has immortalized herself by her liberality on that occasion, and by the handsome compliment she addressed to the poet, that “if it afforded him any satisfaction, she had been more than paid, by her pleasure in reading the *Elegy in a Country Church-yard*.”

Literally and truly, one cannot get on well in the world without money. To be in want of it, is to pass through life with little credit or pleasure; it is to live out of the world, or to be despised if you come into it; it is not to be sent for to court, or asked out to dinner, or noticed in the street; it is not to have your opinion consulted or else rejected with contempt, to have your acquirements carped at and doubted, your good things disparaged, and at last to lose the wit and the spirit to say them; it is to be scrutinized by strangers, and neglected by friends; it is to be a thrall to circumstances, an exile in one's own country; to forego leisure, freedom, ease of body and mind, to be dependent on the good-will and caprice of others, or

earn a precarious and irksome livelihood by some laborious employment; it is to be compelled to stand behind a counter, or to sit at a desk in some public office, or to marry your landlady, or not the person you would wish; or to go out to the East or West Indies, or to get a situation as judge abroad, and return home with a liver-complaint; or to be a law-stationer, or a scrivener or scavenger, or newspaper reporter; or to read law and sit in court without a brief; or to be deprived of the use of your fingers by transcribing Greek manuscripts, or to be a seal-engraver and pore yourself blind; or to go upon the stage, or try some of the Fine Arts; with all your pains, anxiety, and hopes, most probably to fail, or, if you succeed, after the exertions of years, and undergoing constant distress of mind and fortune, to be assailed on every side with envy, back-biting, and falsehood, or to be a favourite with the public for awhile, and then thrown into the background—or a gaol, by the fickleness of taste and some new favourite; to be full of enthusiasm and extravagance in youth, of chagrin and disappointment in after-life; to be jostled by the rabble because you do not ride in your coach, or avoided by those who know your worth and shrink from it as a claim on their respect or their purse; to be a burden to your relations, or unable to do anything for them; to be ashamed to venture into crowds; to have cold comfort at home; to lose by degrees your confidence and any talent you might possess; to grow crabbed, morose, and querulous, dissatisfied with everyone, but most so with yourself; and plagued out of your life, to look about for a place to die in, and quit the world without anyone's asking after your will. The *wiseacres* will possibly, however,

crowd round your coffin, and raise a monument at a considerable expense, and after a lapse of time, to commemorate your genius and your misfortunes!

The only reason why I am disposed to envy the professions of the church or army is, that men can afford to be poor in them without being subjected to insult. A girl with a handsome fortune in a country town may marry a poor lieutenant without degrading herself. An officer is always a gentleman; a clergyman is something more. Echard's book *On the Contempt of the Clergy* is unfounded. It is surely sufficient for any set of individuals, raised above actual want, that their characters are not merely respectable, but sacred. Poverty, when it is voluntary, is never despicable, but takes an heroic aspect. What are the begging friars? Have they not put their base feet upon the necks of princes? Money as a luxury is valuable only as a passport to respect. It is one instrument of power. Where there are other admitted and ostensible claims to this, it becomes superfluous, and the neglect of it is even admired and looked up to as a mark of superiority over it. Even a strolling beggar is a popular character, who makes an open profession of his craft and calling, and who is neither worth a doit nor in want of one. The Scotch are proverbially poor and proud: we know they can remedy their poverty when they set about it. No one is sorry for them. The French emigrants were formerly peculiarly situated in England. The priests were obnoxious to the common people on account of their religion; both they and the nobles, for their politics. Their poverty and dirt subjected them to many rebuffs; but their privations being voluntarily incurred, and also borne with the characteristic



patience and good-humour of the nation, screened them from contempt. I little thought, when I used to meet them walking out in the summer's-evenings at Somers' Town, in their long great coats, their beards covered with snuff, and their eyes gleaming with mingled hope and regret in the rays of the setting sun, and regarded them with pity bordering on respect, as the last filmy vestige of the *ancien régime*, as shadows of loyalty and superstition still flitting about the earth and shortly to disappear from it for ever, that they would one day return over the bleeding corpse of their country, and sit like harpies, a polluted triumph, over the tomb of human liberty! To be a lord, a papist, and poor, is perhaps to some temperaments a consummation devoutly to be wished. There is all the subdued splendour of external rank, the pride of self-opinion, irritated and goaded on by petty privations and vulgar obloquy to a degree of morbid acuteness. Private and public annoyances must perpetually remind him of what he is, of what his ancestors were (a circumstance which might otherwise be forgotten); must narrow the circle of conscious dignity more and more, and the sense of personal worth and pretension must be exalted by habit and contrast into a refined abstraction—"pure in the last recesses of the mind"—unmixed with, or unalloyed by "baser matter!"—It was an hypothesis of the late Mr. Thomas Wedgewood, that there is a principle of compensation in the human mind which equalizes all situations, and by which the absence of anything only gives us a more intense and intimate perception of the reality; that insult adds to pride, that pain looks forward to ease with delight, that hunger already enjoys the unsavoury morsel that is to save

it from perishing; that want is surrounded with imaginary riches, like the poor poet in Hogarth, who has a map of the mines of Peru hanging on his garret walls; in short, that “we can hold a fire in our hand by thinking on the frosty Caucasus”—but this hypothesis, though ingenious and to a certain point true, is to be admitted only in a limited and qualified sense.

There are two classes of people that I have observed who are not so distinct as might be imagined—those who cannot keep their own money in their hands; and those who cannot keep their hands from other people’s. The first are always in want of money, though they do not know what they do with it. They *muddle* it away, without method or object, and without having anything to shew for it. They have not, for instance, a fine house, but they hire two houses at a time; they have not a hot-house in their garden, but a shrubbery within doors; they do not gamble, but they purchase a library, and dispose of it when they move house. A princely benefactor provides them with lodgings, where, for a time, you are sure to find them at home: and they furnish them in a handsome style for those who are to come after them. With all this sieve-like economy, they can only afford a leg of mutton and a single bottle of wine, and are glad to get a lift in a common stage; whereas with a little management and the same disbursements, they might entertain a round of company and drive a smart tilbury. But they set no value upon money, and throw it away on any object or in any manner that first presents itself, merely to have it off their hands, so that you wonder what has become of it. The second class above spoken of not only make away with what belongs to themselves, but you cannot keep any-

thing you have from their rapacious grasp. If you refuse to lend them what you want, they insist that you *must*: if you let them have anything to take charge of for a time (a print or a bust) they swear that you have given it them, and that they have too great a regard for the donor ever to part with it. You express surprise at their having run so largely in debt; but where is the singularity while others continue to lend? And how is this to be helped, when the manner of these sturdy beggars amounts to dragoon-ing you out of your money, and they will not go away without your purse, any more than if they came with a pistol in their hand? If a person has no delicacy, he has you in his power, for you necessarily feel some towards him; and since he will take no denial, you must comply with his peremptory demands, or send for a constable, which out of respect for his character you will not do. These persons are also poor—*light come, light go*—and the bubble bursts at last. Yet if they had employed the same time and pains in any laudable art or study that they have in raising a surreptitious livelihood, they would have been respectable, if not rich. It is their facility in borrowing money that has ruined them. No one will set heartily to work, who has the face to enter a strange house, ask the master of it for a considerable loan, on some plausible and pompous pretext, and walk off with it in his pocket. You might as well suspect a highway-man of addicting himself to hard study in the intervals of his profession.

There is only one other class of persons I can think of, in connexion with the subject of this Essay—those who are always in want of money from the want of spirit to make use of it. Such persons are perhaps

more to be pitied than all the rest. They live in want, in the midst of plenty—dare not touch what belongs to them, are afraid to say that their soul is their own, have their wealth locked up from them by fear and meanness as effectually as by bolts and bars, scarcely allow themselves a coat to their backs or a morsel to eat, are in dread of coming to the parish all their lives, and are not sorry when they die, to think that they shall no longer be an expense to themselves—according to the old epigram :

“ Here lies Father Clarges,  
Who died to save charges! ”

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

## A CHAPTER ON HATS

WE know not what will be thought of our taste in so important a matter, but we must confess we are not fond of a new hat. There is a certain insolence about it: it seems to value itself upon its finished appearance, and to presume upon our liking before we are acquainted with it. In the first place, it comes home more like a marmot or some other living creature, than a manufacture. It is boxed up, and wrapt in silver paper, and brought delicately. It is as sleek as a lap-dog. Then we are to take it out as nicely, and people are to wonder how we shall look in it. Maria twitches one this way, and Sophia that, and Caroline that, and Catharine t'other. We have the difficult task, all the while, of looking easy, till the approving votes are pronounced; our only resource (which is also difficult) being to say good things to all four; or to clap the hat upon each of their heads, and see what pretty milk-women they make. At last the approving votes are pronounced; and (provided it is fine) we may go forth. But how uneasy the sensation about the head! How unlike the old hat, to which we had become used, and which must now make way for this fop of a stranger! We might do what we liked with the former. Dust, rain, a gale of wind, a fall, a squeeze,—nothing affected it. It was a true friend, a friend for all weathers. Its appearance only was against it: in everything else it was the better for wear. But if the roads or the streets are too dry, the

new hat is afraid of getting dusty: if there is wind, and it is not tight, it may be blown off into the dirt: we may have to scramble after it through dust or mud; just reaching it with our fingers, only to see it blown away again. And if rain comes on! Oh, ye gallant apprentices, who have issued forth on a Sunday morning, with Jane or Susan, careless either of storms at nightfall, or toils and scoldings next day! Ye, who have received your new hat and boots but an hour before ye set out; and then issue forth triumphantly, the charmer by your side! She, with arm in yours, and handkerchief in hand, blushing, or eating gingerbread, trips on: ye, admiring, trudge: we ask ye, whether love itself has prevented ye from feeling a certain fearful consciousness of that crowning glory, the new and glossy hat, when the first drops of rain announce the coming of a shower? Ah, hasten, while yet it is of use to haste; ere yet the spotty horror fixes on the nap! Out with the protecting handkerchief, which, tied round the hat, and flowing off in a corner behind, shall gleam through the thickening night like a suburb comet! Trust not the tempting yawn of stable-yard or gateway, or the impossible motion of a coach! The rain will continue: and alas! ye are not so rich as in the morning. Hasten! or think of a new hat's becoming a rain-spout! Think of its well-built crown, its graceful and well-measured fit, the curved-up elegance of its rim, its shadowing gentility when seen in front, its arching grace over the ear when beheld sideways! Think of it also the next day! How altered, how dejected!

How changed from him,  
That life of measure and that soul of rim!

Think of the paper-like change of its consistence; of its limp sadness—its confused and flattened nap, and of that polished and perfect circle, which neither brush nor hot iron shall restore!

We have here spoken of the beauties of a new hat; but abstractedly considered, they are very problematical. Fashion makes beauty for a time. Our ancestors found a grace in the cocked hats now confined to beadles, Chelsea pensioners, and coachmen. They would have laughed at our chimney-tops with a border: though upon the whole we do think them the more graceful of the two. The best modern covering for the head was the imitation of the broad Spanish hat in use about thirty years back, when Mr. Stothard made his designs for the *Novelist's Magazine*. But in proportion as society has been put into a bustle, our hats seem to have narrowed their dimensions: the flaps were clipped off more and more till they became a rim; and now the rim has contracted to a mere nothing; so that what with our close heads and our tight succinct mode of dress, we look as if we were intended for nothing but to dart backwards and forwards on matters of business, with as little hindrance to each other as possible.

This may give us a greater distaste to the hat than it deserves; but good-looking or not, we know of no situation in which a new one can be said to be useful. We have seen how the case is during bad weather: but if the weather is in the finest condition possible, with neither rain nor dust, there may be a hot sunshine; and then the hat is too narrow to shade us: no great evil, it is true! but we must have our pique out against the knave, and turn him to the only account in our power—we must write upon him.

For every other purpose, we hold him as naught. The only place a new hat can be carried into with safety, is a church; for there is plenty of room there. There also takes place its only union of the ornamental with the useful, if so it is to be called: we allude to the preparatory ejaculation whispered into it by the genteel worshipper, before he turns round and makes a bow to Mr. and Mrs. Jones and the Miss Thompsons. There is a formula for this occasion; and doubtless it is often used, to say nothing of extempore effusions: but there are wicked imaginations, who suspect that instead of devouter whisperings, the communer with his lining sometimes ejaculates no more than Swallow, St. James's-street; or, Augarde and Spain, Hatters, No. 51 Oxford-street, London—after which he draws up his head with infinite gravity and preparation, and makes the gentle recognitions aforesaid.

But wherever there is a crowd, the new hat is worse than useless. It is a pity that the general retrenchment of people's finances did away with the flat opera hat, which was a very sensible thing. The round one is only in the way. The matting over the floor of the Opera does not hinder it from getting dusty; not to mention its chance of a kick from the inconsiderate. But from the pit of the other theatres, you may bring it away covered with sawdust, or rubbed up all the wrong way of the nap, or monstrously squeezed into a shapeless lump. The least thing to be expected in a pressure is a great poke in its side like a sunken cheek.

Boating is a mortal enemy to new hats. A shower has you fast in a common boat; or a sail-line, or an inexperienced oar, may knock the hat off; and then



fancy it tilting over the water with the tide, soaked all the while beyond redemption, and escaping from the tips of your outstretched fingers, while you ought all to be pulling the contrary way home.

But of all wrong boxes for a new hat, avoid a mail-coach. If you keep it on, you will begin nodding perhaps at midnight, and then it goes jamming against the side of the coach, to the equal misery of its nap and your own. If you take it off, where is its refuge? Will the clergyman take the least heed of it, who is snoring comfortably in one corner in his nightcap? Or will the farmer, jolting about inexorably? Or the regular traveller, who in his fur-cap and infinite knowledge of highway conveniences, has already beheld it with contempt? Or the old market-woman, whom it is in vain to request to be tender? Or the young damsel, who wonders how you can think of sleeping in such a thing? In the morning you suddenly miss your hat, and ask after it with trepidation. The traveller smiles. They all move their legs, but know nothing of it; till the market-woman exclaims, "Deary me! Well—lord, only think! A hat is it, Sir? Why I do believe,—but I'm sure I never thought o' such a thing more than the child unborn,—that it must be a hat then which I took for a pan I've been a-buying; and so I've had my warm foot in it, Lord help us, ever since five o'clock this blessed morning! "

It is but fair to add that we happen to have an educated antipathy to the hat. At our school no hats were worn, and the cap is too small to be a substitute. Its only use is to astonish the old ladies in the street, who wonder how so small a thing can be kept on; and to this end we used to rub it into the back or

side of the head where it hung like a worsted wonder.  
It is after the fashion of Catharine's cap in the play:  
it seems as if

Moulded on a porringer;  
Why, 'tis a cockle, or a walnut-shell,  
A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap;  
A custard coffin, a bauble.

But we may not add

I love thee well, in that thou likest it not;

Ill befall us, if we ever dislike anything about thee, old nurse of our childhood! How independent of the weather used we to feel in our old friar's dress,—our thick shoes, yellow worsted stockings, and coarse long coat or gown! Our cap was oftener in our hand than on our head, let the weather be what it would. We felt a pride as well as pleasure, when everybody else was hurrying through the streets, in receiving the full summer showers with uncovered poll, sleeking our glad hair like the feathers of a bird.

It must be said for hats in general, that they are a very ancient part of dress, perhaps the most ancient; for a negro, who has nothing else upon him, sometimes finds it necessary to guard off the sun with a hat of leaves or straw. The Chinese, who carry their records farther back than any other people, are a hatted race, both narrow-brimmed and broad. We are apt to think of the Greeks as a bare-headed people; and they liked to be so; but they had hats for journeying in, such as may be seen on the statues of Mercury, who was the god of travellers. They were large and flapped, and were sometimes fastened round under the chin like a lady's bonnet. The

Eastern nations generally wore turbans, and do still, with the exception of the Persians, who have exchanged them for large conical caps of felt. The Romans copied the Greeks in their dress, as in everything else; but the poorer orders wore a cap like their boasted Phrygian ancestors, resembling the one which the reader may see about the streets upon the bust of Canova's Paris. The others would put their robes about their heads upon occasion,—after the fashion of the hoods of the Middle Ages, and of the cloth head-dresses which we see in the portraits of Dante and Petrarch. Of a similar mode are the draperies on the heads of our old Plantagenet kings and of Chaucer. The velvet cap which succeeded, appears to have come from Italy, as seen in the portraits of Raphael and Titian; and it would probably have continued till the French times of Charles the Second, for our ancestors up to that period were great admirers of Italy, had not Philip the Second of Spain come over to marry our Queen Mary. The extreme heats of Spain had forced the natives upon taking to that ingenious compound of the hat and umbrella, still known by the name of the Spanish hat. We know not whether Philip himself wore it. His father, Charles the Fifth, who was at the top of the world, is represented as delighting in a little humble-looking cap. But we conceive it was either from Philip, or some gentleman in his train, that the hat and feather succeeded among us to the cap and jewels of Henry the Eighth. The ascendancy of Spain in those times carried it into other parts of Europe. The French, not requiring so much shade from the sun, and always playing with and altering their dress, as a child does his toy, first covered the brim with

feathers, then gave them a pinch in front; then came pinches up at the side; and at last appeared the fierce and triple-daring cocked-hat. This disappeared in our childhood, or only survived among the military, the old, and the reverend, who could not willingly part with their habitual dignity. An old beau or so would also retain it, in memory of its victories when young. We remember its going away from the heads of the footguards. The heavy dragoons retained it till lately. It is now almost sunk into the mock-heroic, and confined, as we before observed, to beadles and coachmen, etc. The modern clerical beaver, agreeably to the deliberation with which our establishments depart from all custom, is a cocked hat with the front flap let down, and only a slight pinch remaining behind. This is worn also by the judges, the lawyers being of clerical extraction. Still, however, the true cocked-hat lingers here and there with a solitary old gentleman, and wherever it appears in such company, begets a certain retrospective reverence. There was a something in its connexion with the high-bred drawing-room times of the seventeenth century; in the gallant though quaint ardour of its look; and in its being lifted up in salutations with that deliberate loftiness, the arm arching up in front and the hand slowly raising it by the front angle with finger and thumb,—that could not easily die. We remember, when our steward at school, remarkable for his inflexible air of precision and dignity, left off his cocked-hat for a round one; there was, undoubtedly, though we dared only half confess it to our minds, a sort of diminished majesty about him. His infinite self-possession began to look remotely finite. His Crown Imperial was a little blighted. It

was like divesting a column of its capital. But the native stateliness was there, informing the new hat. He

Had not yet lost

*All* his original beaver; nor appeared  
Less than arch-steward ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscured.

The late Emperor Paul had conceived such a sense of the dignity of the cocked hat, aggravated by its having been deposed by the round one of the French republicans, that he ordered all persons in his dominions never to dare be seen in public with round hats, upon pain of being knouted and sent to Siberia.

Hats being the easiest part of the European dress to be taken off, are doffed among us out of reverence. The Orientals, on the same account, put off their slippers instead of turbans, which is the reason why the Jews still keep their heads covered during worship. The Spanish grandees have the privilege of wearing their hats in the royal presence, probably in commemoration of the free spirit in which the Cortes used to crown the sovereign; telling him (we suppose in their corporate capacity) that they were better men than he, but chose him of their own free will for their master. The grandees only claim to be as good men, unless their families are older. There is a well-known story of a picture, in which the Virgin Mary is represented with a label coming out of her mouth, saying to a Spanish gentleman who has politely taken off his hat, "Cousin, be covered." But the most interesting anecdote connected with a hat belongs to the family of the De Courcys, Lord Kinsale. One of their ancestors, at an old period of our history, having

overthrown a huge and insolent champion, who had challenged the whole court, was desired by the king to ask him some favour. He requested that his descendants should have the privilege of keeping their heads covered in the royal presence, and they do so to this day. The new lord, we believe, always comes to court on purpose to vindicate his right. We have heard, that on the last occasion, probably after a long interval, some of the courtiers thought it might as well have been dispensed with; which was a foolish as well as a jealous thing, for these exceptions only prove the royal rule. The Spanish grandees originally took their privilege instead of receiving it; but when the spirit of it had gone, their covered heads were only so many intense recognitions of the king's dignity, which it was thought such a mighty thing to resemble. A Quaker's hat is a more formidable thing than a grandee's.

LEIGH HUNT.

## HAPPY GUESSING

DR. CHALMERS used to say that in the dynamics of human affairs, two qualities were essential to greatness—Power and Promptitude. One man might have both, another power without promptitude, another promptitude without power. We must all feel the common sense of this, and can readily see how it applies to a general in the field, to a pilot in a storm, to a sportsman, to a fencer, to a debater. It is the same with an operating surgeon at all times, and may be at any time with the practitioner of the art of healing. He must be ready for what are called emergencies—cases which rise up at your feet, and must be dealt with on the instant,—he must have power and promptitude.

It is a curious condition of mind that this requires: it is like sleeping with your pistol under your pillow, and it on full cock; a moment lost and all may be lost. There is the very nick of time. This is what we mean by presence of mind; by a man having such a subject at his finger ends; that part of the mind lying nearest the outer world, and having to act on it through the bodily organs, through the will—the outposts must be always awake. It is of course, so to speak, only a portion of the mind that is thus needed and thus available; if the whole mind were for ever at the advanced posts, it would soon lose itself in this endeavour to keep it. Now, though the thing needed to be done may be simple enough, what goes to the

doing of it, and to the being at once ready and able to do it, involves much: the wedge would not be a wedge, or do a wedge's work, without the width behind as well as the edge in front. Your men of promptitude without genius or power, including knowledge and will, are those who present the wedge the wrong way. Thus your extremely prompt people are often doing the wrong thing, which is almost always worse than nothing. We must have just enough of the right knowledge and no more; we must have the habit of using this; we must have self-reliance, and the consentaneousness of the entire mind; and what our hand finds to do, we must do with our might as well as with it. Therefore it is that this master act of the man, under some sudden and great unexpected crisis, is in a great measure performed unconsciously as to its mental means. The man is so *totus in illo*, that there is no bit of the mind left to watch and record the acts of the rest; therefore men, when they have done some signal feat of presence of mind, if asked how they did it, generally don't very well know—they just did it: it was, in fact, done and then thought of, not thought of and then done, in which case it would likely never have been done. Not that the act was uncaused by mind; it is one of the highest powers of mind thus to act; but it is done, if I may use the phrase, by an acquired instinct. You will find all this in that wonderful old Greek who was Alexander the Great's and the old world's schoolmaster, and ours if we were wise,—whose truthfulness and clear insight one wonders at the longer he lives. He seems to have seen the human mind as a bird or an engineer does the earth—he knew the plan of it. We nowadays



see it as one sees a country, athwart and in perspective, and from the side; he saw it from above and from below. There are therefore no shadows, no foreshortenings, no clear-obscure, indeed no disturbing medium; it is as if he examined every thing *in vacuo*.

My object in what I have now written and am going to write, is to impress upon medical students the value of power and promptitude in combination, for their professional purposes; the uses to them of nearness of the *Noûs*, and of happy guessing; and how you may see the sense, and neatness, and pith of that excellent thinker, as well as best of all story-tellers, Miss Austen, when she says in *Emma*: "Depend upon it, a lucky guess is never merely luck, there is always some talent in it." Talent here denoting intelligence and will in action. In all sciences except those called exact, this happy guessing plays a large part, and in none more than in medicine, which is truly a tentative art, founded upon likelihood, and is therefore what we call contingent. Instead of this view of the healing art discouraging us from making our ultimate principles as precise as we should make our observations, it should urge us the more to this; for, depend upon it, that guess as we may often have to do, he will guess best, most happily for himself and his patient, who has the greatest amount of true knowledge, and the most serviceable amount of what we may call mental cash, ready money, and ready weapons.

We must not only have wisdom, which is knowledge assimilated and made our own, but we must, as the Lancashire men say and do, *have wit to use it*. We may carry a nugget of gold in our pocket, or a £100 bank-note, but unless we can get it *changed*.

it is of little use, and we must moreover have the coin of the country we are in. This want of presence of mind, and having your wits about you, is as fatal to a surgeon as to a general.

That wise little man, Dr. Henry Marshall, little in body but not little in mind, in brain, and in worth, used to give an instance of this. A young, well-educated surgeon, attached to a regiment quartered at Musselburgh, went out professionally with two officers who were in search of "satisfaction." One fell shot in the thigh, and in half an hour after he was found dead, the surgeon kneeling pale and grim over him, with his two thumbs sunk in his thigh *below* the wound, the grass steeped in blood. If he had put them two inches higher, or extemporized a tourniquet with his sash and the pistol's ramrod and a stone, he might have saved his friend's life and his own—for he shot himself that night.

Here is another. Robbie Watson, whom I now see walking mildly about the streets—having taken to coal—was driver of the Dumfries coach by Biggar. One day he had changed horses, and was starting down a steep hill, with an acute turn at the foot, when he found his wheelers, two new horses, utterly ignorant of backing. They got furious, and we outside got alarmed. Robbie made an attempt to pull up, and then with an odd smile took his whip, gathered up his reins, and lashed the entire four into a gallop. If we had not seen his face we would have thought him a maniac; he kept them well together, and shot down like an arrow, as far as we could see to certain destruction. Right in front at the turn was a stout gate into a field, shut; he drove them straight at that, and through we went, the gate

broken into shivers, and we finding ourselves safe, and the very horses enjoying the joke. I remember we emptied our pockets into Robbie's hat, which he had taken off to wipe his head. Now, in a few seconds all this must have passed through his head: "That horse is not a wheeler, nor that one either; we'll come to mischief; there's the gate; yes, I'll do it." And he did it; but then he had to do it with his might; he had to make it impossible for his four horses to do anything but toss the gate before them.

Here is another case. Dr. Reid of Peebles, long famous in the end of last and beginning of this century, as the Doctor of Tweeddale; a man of great force of character, and a true Philip, a lover of horses, saw one Fair day a black horse, entire, thoroughbred. The groom asked a low price, and would answer no questions. At the close of the fair the doctor bought him, amid the derision of his friends. Next morning he rode him up Tweed, came home after a long round, and had never been better carried. This went on for some weeks; the fine creature was without a fault. One Sunday morning, he was posting up by Neidpath at a great pace, the country people trooping into the town to church. Opposite the fine old castle, the thoroughbred stood stock still, and it needed all the doctor's horsemanship to counteract the law of projectiles; he did, and sat still, and not only gave no sign of urging the horse, but rather intimated that it was his particular desire that he should stop. He sat there a full hour, his friends making an excellent joke of it, and he declining, of course, all interference. At the end of the hour, the Black Duke, as he was called, turned one ear forward, then another, looked aside,

shook himself, and moved on, his master intimating that this was exactly what he wished; and from that day till his death, some fifteen years after, never did these two friends allude to this little circumstance, and it was never repeated; though it turned out that he had killed his two men previously. The doctor must have, when he got him, said to himself, "If he is not stolen there is a reason for his paltry price," and he would go over all the possibilities. So that when he stood still, he would say, "Ah, this is it"; but then he saw this at once, and lost no time, and did nothing. Had he given the horse one dig with his spurs, or one cut with his whip, or an impatient jerk with his bit, the case would have failed. When a colt it had been brutally used, and being nervous, it lost its judgment, poor thing, and lost its presence of mind.

One more instance of nearness of the *Noûs*. A lady was in front of her lawn with her children, when a mad dog made his appearance, pursued by the peasants. What did she do? What would you have done? Shut your eyes and think. She went straight to the dog, received its head in her thick stuff gown, between her knees, and muffling it up, held it with all her might till the men came up. No one was hurt. Of course, she fainted after it was all right.

We all know (but why should we not know again?) the story of the Grecian mother who saw her child sporting on the edge of the bridge. She knew that a cry would startle it over into the raging stream—she came gently near, and opening her bosom allured the little scapegrace.

I once saw a great surgeon, after settling a par-

ticular procedure as to a life-and-death operation, as a general settles his order of battle. He began his work, and at the second cut altered the entire conduct of the operation. No one not in the secret could have told this: not a moment's pause, not a quiver of the face, not a look of doubt. This is the same master power in man, which makes the difference between Sir John Moore and Sir John Cope.

Mrs. Major Robertson, a woman of slight make, great beauty, and remarkable energy, courage, and sense (she told me the story herself), on going up to her bedroom at night—there being no one in the house but a servant girl, in the ground floor—saw a portion of a man's foot projecting from under the bed. She gave no cry of alarm, but shut the door as usual, set down her candle, and began as if to undress, when she said aloud to herself, with an impatient tone and gesture, "I've forgotten that key again, I declare"; and leaving the candle burning, and the door open, she went downstairs, got the watchman, and secured the proprietor of the foot, which had not moved an inch. How many women or men could have done, or rather been all this!

JOHN BROWN, M.D.—*Horæ Subsecivæ.*

## CITY OF LONDON CHURCHES

If the confession that I have often travelled from this Covent Garden lodging of mine on Sundays, should give offence to those who never travel on Sundays, they will be satisfied (I hope) by my adding that the journeys in question were made to churches.

Not that I have any curiosity to hear powerful preachers. Time was, when I was dragged by the hair of my head, as one may say, to hear too many. On summer evenings, when every flower, and tree, and bird, might have better addressed my soft young heart, I have in my day been caught in the palm of a female hand by the crown, have been violently scrubbed from the neck to the roots of the hair as a purification for the Temple, and have then been carried off highly charged with saponaceous electricity, to be steamed like a potato in the unventilated breath of the powerful Boanerges Boiler and his congregation, until what small mind I had, was quite steamed out of me. In which pitiable plight I have been haled out of the place of meeting, at the conclusion of the exercises, and catechized respecting Boanerges Boiler, his fifthly, his sixthly, and his seventhly, until I have regarded that reverend person in the light of a most dismal and oppressive Charade. Time was, when I was carried off to platform assemblages at which no human child, whether of wrath or grace, could possibly keep its eyes open, and when I felt the fatal sleep stealing, stealing over me,

and when I gradually heard the orator in possession, spinning and humming like a great top, until he rolled, collapsed, and tumbled over, and I discovered to my burning shame and fear, that as to that last stage it was not he, but I. I have sat under Boanerges when he has specifically addressed himself to us—us, the infants—and at this present writing I hear his lumbering jocularity (which never amused us, though we basely pretended that it did), and I behold his big round face, and look up the inside of his outstretched coat-sleeve as if it were a telescope with the stopper on, and I hate him with an unwholesome hatred for two hours. Through such means did it come to pass that I knew the powerful preacher from beginning to end, all over and all through, while I was very young, and that I left him behind at an early period of life. Peace be with him! More peace than he brought to me!

Now, I have heard many preachers since that time—not powerful! merely Christian, unaffected, and reverential—and I have had many such preachers on my roll of friends. But, it was not to hear these, any more than the powerful class, that I made my Sunday journeys. They were journeys of curiosity to the numerous churches in the City of London. It came into my head one day, here had I been cultivating a familiarity with all the churches of Rome, and I knew nothing of the insides of the old churches of London. This befell on a Sunday morning. I began my expeditions that very same day, and they lasted me a year.

I never wanted to know the names of the churches to which I went, and to this hour I am profoundly ignorant in that particular of at least nine-tenths of

them. Indeed, saving that I know the church of old GOWER's tomb (he lies in effigy with his head upon his books) to be the church of Saint Saviour's, Southwark; and the church of MILTON's tomb to be the church of Cripplegate; and the church on Cornhill with the great golden keys to be the church of Saint Peter; I doubt if I could pass a competitive examination in any of the names. No question did I ever ask of living creature concerning these churches, and no answer to any antiquarian question on the subject that I ever put to books, shall harass the reader's soul. A full half of my pleasure in them arose out of their mystery; mysterious I found them, mysterious they shall remain for me.

Where shall I begin my round of hidden and forgotten old churches in the City of London?

It is twenty minutes short of eleven on a Sunday morning, when I stroll down one of the many narrow hilly streets in the City that tend due south to the Thames. It is my first experiment, and I have come to the region of Whittington in an omnibus, and we have put down a fierce-eyed, spare old woman, whose slate-coloured gown smells of herbs, and who walked up Aldersgate-street to some chapel where she comforts herself with brimstone doctrine, I warrant. We have also put down a stouter and sweeter old lady, with a pretty large prayer-book in an unfolded pocket handkerchief, who got out at a corner of a court near Stationers' Hall, and who I think must go to church there, because she is the widow of some deceased old Company's Beadle. The rest of our freight were mere chance pleasure-seekers and rural walkers, and went on to the Blackwall railway. So many bells are ringing, when I stand undecided at a



street corner, that every sheep in the ecclesiastical fold might be a bell-wether. The discordance is fearful. My state of indecision is referable to, and about equally divisible among, four great churches, which are all within sight and sound, all within the space of a few square yards.

As I stand at the street corner, I don't see as many as four people at once going to church, though I see as many as four churches with their steeples clamouring for people. I choose my church, and go up the flight of steps to the great entrance in the tower. A mouldy tower within, and like a neglected washhouse. A rope comes through the beamed roof, and a man in the corner pulls it and clashes the bell—a whity-brown man, whose clothes were once black—a man with flue on him, and cobweb. He stares at me, wondering how I come there, and I stare at him, wondering how he comes there. Through a screen of wood and glass, I peep into the dim church. About twenty people are discernible, waiting to begin. Christening would seem to have faded out of this church long ago, for the font has the dust of desuetude thick upon it, and its wooden cover (shaped like an old-fashioned tureen-cover) looks as if it wouldn't come off upon requirement. I perceive the altar to be rickety and the Commandments damp. Entering after this survey, I jostle the clergyman in his canonicals, who is entering too from a dark lane behind a pew of state with curtains, where nobody sits. The pew is ornamented with four blue wands, once carried by four somebodys, I suppose, before somebody else, but which there is nobody now to hold or receive honour from. I open the door of a family pew, and shut myself in; if I could occupy

twenty family pews at once I might have them. The clerk, a brisk young man (how does *he* come here?), glances at me knowingly, as who should say, "You have done it now! you must stop." Organ plays. Organ-loft is in a small gallery across the church; gallery congregation, two girls. I wonder within myself what will happen when we are required to sing.

There is a pale heap of books in the corner of my pew, and while the organ, which is hoarse and sleepy, plays in such fashion that I can hear more of the rusty working of the stops than of any music, I look at the books, which are mostly bound in faded baize and stuff. They belonged in 1754 to the Dowgate family; and who were they? Jane Comport must have married Young Dowgate, and come into the family that way; Young Dowgate was courting Jane Comport when he gave her her prayer-book, and recorded the presentation in the fly-leaf; if Jane were fond of Young Dowgate, why did she die and leave the book here? Perhaps at the rickety altar, and before the damp Commandments, she, Comport, had taken him, Dowgate, in a flush of youthful hope and joy, and perhaps it had not turned out in the long run as great a success as was expected?

The opening of the service recalls my wandering thoughts. I then find, to my astonishment, that I have been, and still am, taking a strong kind of invisible snuff, up my nose, into my eyes, and down my throat. I wink, sneeze, and cough. The clerk sneezes; the clergyman winks; the unseen organist sneezes and coughs (and probably winks); all our little party wink, sneeze, and cough. The snuff seems to be made of the decay of matting, wood, cloth,

stone, iron, earth, and something else. Is the something else the decay of dead citizens in the vaults below? As sure as Death it is! Not only in the cold damp February day, do we cough and sneeze dead citizens, all through the service, but dead citizens have got into the very bellows of the organ, and half choked the same. We stamp our feet to warm them, and dead citizens arise in heavy clouds. Dead citizens stick upon the walls, and lie pulverized on the sounding-board over the clergyman's head, and, when a gust of air comes, tumble down upon him.

In this first experience I was so nauseated by too much snuff, made of the Dowgate family, the Comport branch, and other families and branches, that I gave but little heed to our dull manner of ambling through the service; to the brisk clerk's manner of encouraging us to try a note or two at psalm time; to the gallery congregation's manner of enjoying a shrill duet, without a notion of time or tune; to the whity-brown man's manner of shutting the minister into the pulpit, and being very particular with the lock of the door, as if he were a dangerous animal. But I tried again next Sunday, and soon accustomed myself to the dead citizens when I found that I could not possibly get on without them among the City churches.

Another Sunday.

After being again rung for by conflicting bells, like a leg of mutton or a laced hat a hundred years ago, I make selection of a church oddly put away in a corner among a number of lanes—a smaller church than the last, and an ugly: of about the date of Queen Anne. As a congregation, we are fourteen

strong: not counting an exhausted charity school in a gallery, which has dwindled away to four boys, and two girls. In the porch is a benefaction of loaves of bread, which there would seem to be nobody left in the exhausted congregation to claim, and which I saw an exhausted beadle, long faded out of uniform, eating with his eyes for self and family when I passed in. There is also an exhausted clerk in a brown wig, and two or three exhausted doors and windows have been bricked up, and the service books are musty, and the pulpit cushions are threadbare, and the whole of the church furniture is in a very advanced stage of exhaustion. We are three old women (habitual), two young lovers (accidental), two tradesmen, one with a wife and one alone, an aunt and nephew, again two girls (these two girls dressed out for church with everything about them limp that should be stiff, and *vice versa*, are an invariable experience), and three sniggering boys. The clergyman is, perhaps, the chaplain of a civic company; he has the moist and vinous look, and eke the bulbous boots, of one acquainted with 'Twenty port, and comet vintages.

We are so quiet in our dullness that the three sniggering boys, who have got away into a corner by the altar-railling, give us a start, like crackers, whenever they laugh. And this reminds me of my own village church where, during sermon-time on bright Sundays when the birds are very musical indeed, farmers' boys patter out over the stone pavement, and the clerk steps out from his desk after them, and is distinctly heard in the summer repose to pursue and punch them in the churchyard, and is seen to return with a meditative countenance, making

believe that nothing of the sort has happened. The aunt and nephew in this City church are much disturbed by the sniggering boys. The nephew is himself a boy, and the sniggerers tempt him to secular thoughts of marbles and string, by secretly offering such commodities to his distant contemplation. This young Saint Anthony for a while resists, but presently becomes a backslider, and in dumb show defies the sniggerers to "heave" a marble or two in his direction. Herein he is detected by the aunt (a rigorous reduced gentlewoman who has the charge of offices), and I perceive that worthy relative to poke him in the side, with the corrugated hooked handle of an ancient umbrella. The nephew revenges himself for this, by holding his breath and terrifying his kinswoman with the dread belief that he has made up his mind to burst. Regardless of whispers and shakes, he swells and becomes discoloured, and yet again swells and becomes discoloured, until the aunt can bear it no longer, but leads him out, with no visible neck, and with his eyes going before him like a prawn's. This causes the sniggerers to regard flight as an eligible move, and I know which of them will go out first, because of the over-devout attention that he suddenly concentrates on the clergyman. In a little while, this hypocrite, with an elaborate demonstration of hushing his footsteps, and with a face generally expressive of having until now forgotten a religious appointment elsewhere, is gone. Number two gets out in the same way, but rather quicker. Number three getting safely to the door, there turns reckless, and banging it open, flies forth with a Whoop! that vibrates to the top of the tower above

us.

The clergyman, who is of a prandial presence and a muffled voice, may be scant of hearing as well as of breath, but he only glances up, as having an idea that somebody has said Amen in a wrong place, and continues his steady jog-trot, like a farmer's wife going to market. He does all he has to do, in the same easy way, and gives us a concise sermon, still like a jog-trot of the farmer's wife on a level road. Its drowsy cadence soon lulls the three old women asleep, and the unmarried tradesman sits looking out at window, and the married tradesman sits looking at his wife's bonnet, and the lovers sit looking at one another, so superlatively happy, that I mind when I, turned of eighteen, went with my Angelica to a City church on account of a shower (by this special coincidence that it was in Huggin-lane), and when I said to my Angelica, "Let the blessed event, Angelica, occur at no altar but this!" and when my Angelica consented that it should occur at no other—which it certainly never did, for it never occurred anywhere. And O, Angelica, what has become of you, this present Sunday morning when I can't attend to the sermon; and, more difficult question than that, what has become of Me as I was when I sat by your side?

But, we receive the signal to make that unanimous dive, which surely is a little conventional—like the strange rustlings and settlings and clearings of throats and noses, which are never dispensed with, at certain points of the Church service, and are never held to be necessary under any other circumstances. In a minute more it is all over, and the organ expresses itself to be as glad of it as it can be of anything in its rheumatic state, and in another minute we are all

of us out of the church, and Whity-brown has locked it up. Another minute or little more, and, in the neighbouring churchyard—not the yard of that church, but of another—a churchyard like a great shabby old mignonette box, with two trees in it and one tomb—I meet Whity-brown, in his private capacity, fetching a pint of beer for his dinner from the public-house in the corner, where the keys of the rotting fire-ladders are kept and were never asked for, and where there is a ragged, white-seamed, out-at-elbowed bagatelle board on the first floor.

In one of these City churches, and only in one, I found an individual who might have been claimed as expressly a City personage. I remember the church, by the feature that the clergyman couldn't get to his own desk without going through the clerk's, or couldn't get to the pulpit without going through the reading-desk—I forget which, and it is no matter—and by the presence of this personage among the exceedingly sparse congregation. I doubt if we were a dozen, and we had no exhausted charity school to help us out. The personage was dressed in black of square cut, and was stricken in years, and wore a black velvet cap, and cloth shoes. He was of a staid, wealthy, and dissatisfied aspect. In his hand, he conducted to church a mysterious child: a child of the feminine gender. The child had a beaver hat, with a stiff drab plume that surely never belonged to any bird of the air. The child was further attired in a nankeen frock, and spencer, brown boxing-gloves, and a veil. It had a blemish, in the nature of currant jelly, on its chin; and was a thirsty child. Insomuch that the personage carried in his pocket a green bottle, from which, when the first psalm was given

out, the child was openly refreshed. At all other times throughout the service it was motionless, and stood on the seat of the large pew, closely fitted into the corner, like a rain-water pipe.

The personage never opened his book, and never looked at the clergyman. *He* never sat down either, but stood with his arms leaning on the top of the pew, and his forehead sometimes shaded with his right hand, always looking at the church door. It was a long church for a church of its size, and he was at the upper end, but he always looked at the door. That he was an old bookkeeper, or an old trader who had kept his own books, and that he might be seen at the Bank of England about Dividend times, no doubt. That he had lived in the City all his life and was disdainful of other localities, no doubt. Why he looked at the door, I never absolutely proved, but it is my belief that he lived in expectation of the time when the citizens would come back to live in the City, and its ancient glories would be renewed. He appeared to expect that this would occur on a Sunday, and that the wanderers would first appear, in the deserted churches, penitent and humbled. Hence, he looked at the door which they never darkened. Whose child the child was, whether the child of a disinherited daughter, or some parish orphan whom the personage had adopted, there was nothing to lead up to. It never played, or skipped, or smiled. Once, the idea occurred to me that it was an automaton, and that the personage had made it; but following the strange couple out one Sunday, I heard the personage say to it, "Thirteen thousand pounds"; to which it added in a weak human voice, "Seventeen and fourpence." Four Sundays I followed them



out, and this is all I ever heard or saw them say. One Sunday, I followed them home. They lived behind a pump, and the personage opened their abode with an exceeding large key. The one solitary inscription on their house related to a fire-plug. The house was partly undermined by a deserted and closed gateway; its windows were blind with dirt; and it stood with its face disconsolately turned to a wall. Five great churches and two small ones rang their Sunday bells between this house and the church the couple frequented, so they must have had some special reason for going a quarter of a mile to it. The last time I saw them was on this wise. I had been to explore another church at a distance, and happened to pass the church they frequented, at about two of the afternoon when that edifice was closed. But, a little side-door, which I had never observed before, stood open, and disclosed certain cellarous steps. Methought "They are airing the vaults to-day," when the personage and the child silently arrived at the steps, and silently descended. Of course I came to the conclusion that the personage had at last despaired of the looked-for return of the penitent citizens, and that he and the child went down to get themselves buried.

In the course of my pilgrimages I came upon one obscure church which had broken out in the melodramatic style, and was got up with various tawdry decorations, much after the manner of the extinct London may-poles. These attractions had induced several young priests or deacons in black bibs for waistcoats, and several young ladies interested in that holy order (the proportion being, as I estimated, seventeen young ladies to a deacon), to come into

the City as a new and odd excitement. It was wonderful to see how these young people played out their little play in the heart of the City, all among themselves, without the deserted City's knowing anything about it. It was as if you should take an empty counting-house on a Sunday, and act one of the old Mysteries there. They had impressed a small school (from what neighbourhood I don't know) to assist in the performances, and it was pleasant to notice frantic garlands of inscription on the walls, especially addressing those poor innocents in characters impossible for them to decipher. There was a remarkably agreeable smell of pomatum in this congregation.

But, in other cases, rot and mildew and dead citizens formed the uppermost scent, while, infused into it in a dreamy way not at all displeasing, was the staple character of the neighbourhood. In the churches about Mark-lane, for example, there was a dry whiff of wheat; and I accidentally struck an airy sample of barley out of an aged hassock in one of them. From Rood-lane to Tower-street, and thereabouts, there was often a subtle flavour of wine: sometimes of tea. One church near Mincing-lane smelt like a druggist's drawer. Behind the Monument the service had a flavour of damaged oranges, which, a little farther down towards the river, tempered into herrings, and gradually toned into a cosmopolitan blast of fish. In one church, the exact counterpart of the church in the Rake's Progress where the hero is being married to the horrible old lady, there was no speciality of atmosphere, until the organ shook a perfume of hides all over us from some adjacent warehouse.

Be the scent what it would, however, there was no speciality in the people. There were never enough of them to represent any calling or neighbourhood. They had all gone elsewhere over-night, and the few stragglers in the many churches languished there inexpressively.

Among the Uncommercial travels in which I have engaged, this year of Sunday travel occupies its own place, apart from all the rest. Whether I think of the church where the sails of the oyster-boats in the river almost flapped against the windows, or of the church where the railroad made the bells hum as the train rushed by above the roof, I recall a curious experience. On summer Sundays, in the gentle rain or the bright sunshine—either deepening the idleness of the idle City—I have sat, in that singular silence which belongs to resting-places usually astir, in scores of buildings at the heart of the world's metropolis, unknown to far greater numbers of people speaking the English tongue, than the ancient edifices of the Eternal City, or the Pyramids of Egypt. The dark vestries and registries into which I have peeped, and the little hemmed-in churchyards that have echoed to my feet, have left impressions on my memory as distinct and quaint as any it has in that way received. In all those dusty registers that the worms are eating, there is not a line but made some hearts leap, or some tears flow, in their day. Still and dry now, still and dry! and the old tree at the window with no room for its branches, has seen them all out. So with the tomb of the old Master of the old Company, on which it drips. His son restored it and died, his daughter restored it and died, and then he had been remembered long enough,

and the tree took possession of him, and his name cracked out.

There are few more striking indications of the changes of manners and customs that two or three hundred years have brought about than these deserted churches. Many of them are handsome and costly structures, several of them were designed by WREN, many of them arose from the ashes of the great fire, others of them outlived the plague and the fire too, to die a slow death in these later days. No one can be sure of the coming time; but it is not too much to say of it that it has no sign in its outsetting tides of the reflux to these churches of their congregations and uses. They remain like the tombs of the old citizens who lie beneath them and around them, Monuments of another age. They are worth a Sunday-exploration, now and then, for they yet echo, not unharmoniously, to the time when the City of London really was London; when the 'Prentices and Trained Bands were of mark in the state; when even the Lord Mayor himself was a Reality—not a Fiction conventionally be-puffed on one day in the year by illustrious friends, who no less conventionally laugh at him on the remaining three hundred and sixty-four days.

CHARLES DICKENS—*The Uncommercial Traveller.*

## OGRES

I DARE say the reader has remarked that the upright and independent vowel, which stands in the vowel-list between E and O, has formed the subject of the main part of these essays. How does that vowel feel this morning?—fresh, good-humoured, and lively? The Roundabout lines, which fall from this pen, are correspondingly brisk and cheerful. Has anything, on the contrary, disagreed with the vowel? Has its rest been disturbed, or was yesterday's dinner too good, or yesterday's wine not good enough? Under such circumstances, a darkling misanthropic tinge, no doubt, is cast upon the paper. The jokes, if attempted, are elaborate and dreary. The bitter temper breaks out. That sneering manner is adopted, which you know, and which exhibits itself so especially when the writer is speaking about women. A moody carelessness comes over him. He sees no good in anybody or thing: and treats gentlemen, ladies, history, and things in general, with a like gloomy flippancy. Agreed, when the vowel in question is in that mood, if you like airy gaiety and tender gushing benevolence—if you want to be satisfied with yourself and the rest of your fellow-beings; I recommend you, my dear creature, to go to some other shop in Cornhill, or turn to some other article. There are moods in the mind of the vowel of which we are speaking when it is ill-conditioned and cap-tious. Who always keeps good health and good

humour? Do not philosophers grumble? Are not sages sometimes out of temper? And do not angel-women go off in tantrums? To-day my mood is dark. I scowl as I dip my pen in the ink-stand.

Here is the day come round—for everything here is done with the utmost regularity:—intellectual labour, sixteen hours; meals, thirty-two minutes; exercise, a hundred and forty-eight minutes; conversation with the family, chiefly literary, and about the housekeeping, one hour and four minutes; sleep, three hours and fifteen minutes (at the end of the month, when the Magazine is complete, I own I take eight minutes more); and the rest for the toilette and the world. Well, I say, the *Roundabout Paper Day* being come, and the subject long since settled in my mind, an excellent subject—a most telling, lively, and popular subject—I go to breakfast determined to finish the meal in  $9\frac{3}{4}$  minutes, as usual, and then retire to my desk and work, when oh,—provoking!—here in the paper is the very subject treated on which I was going to write! Yesterday another paper which I saw treated it—and of course, as I need not tell you, spoiled it. Last Saturday, another paper had an article on the subject; perhaps you may guess what it was—but I won't tell you. Only this is true, my favourite subject, which was about to make the best paper we have had for a long time; my bird, my game that I was going to shoot and serve up with such a delicate sauce, has been found by other sportsmen; and pop, pop, pop, a half-dozen of guns have banged at it, mangled it, and brought it down.

“And can't you take some other text?” say you.

All this is mighty well. But if you have set your heart on a certain dish for dinner, be it cold boiled veal, or what you will, and they bring you turtle and venison, don't you feel disappointed! During your walk you have been making up your mind that that cold meat, with moderation and a pickle, will be a very sufficient dinner: you have accustomed your thoughts to it; and here, in place of it, is a turkey, surrounded by coarse sausages, or a reeking pigeon-pie, or a fulsome roast pig. I have known many a good and kind man made furiously angry by such *contretemps*. I have known him lose his temper, call his wife and servants names, and a whole household made miserable. If, then, as is notoriously the case, it is too dangerous to balk a man about his dinner, how much more about his article! I came to my meal with an ogre-like appetite and gusto. Fee, faw, fum! Wife, where is that tender little princekin? Have you trussed him, and did you stuff him nicely, and have you taken care to baste him, and do him, not too brown, as I told you? Quick! I am hungry! I begin to whet my knife, to roll my eyes about, and roar and clap my huge chest like a gorilla; and then my poor Ogrina has to tell me that the little princes have all run away, whilst she was in the kitchen, making the paste to bake them in? I pause in the description. I won't condescend to report the bad language, which you know must ensue, when an ogre, whose mind is ill-regulated, and whose habits of self-indulgence are notorious, finds himself disappointed of his greedy hopes. What treatment of his wife, what abuse and brutal behaviour to his children, who, though ogrillons, are children! My dears, you may fancy, and need not ask my delicate pen to

describe, the language and behaviour of a vulgar, coarse, greedy, large man with an immense mouth and teeth, which are too frequently employed in the gobbling and crunching of raw man's meat.

And in this circuitous way you see I have reached my present subject, which is, Ogres. You fancy they are dead or only fictitious characters—mythical representatives of strength, cruelty, stupidity, and lust for blood? Though they had seven-leagued boots, you remember all sorts of little whipping-snapping Tom Thumbs used to elude and outrun them. They were so stupid that they gave in to the most shallow ambushes and artifices: witness that well-known ogre, who, because Jack cut open the hasty-pudding, instantly ripped open his own stupid waistcoat and interior. They were cruel, brutal, disgusting, with their sharpened teeth, immense knives, and roaring voices! but they always ended by being overcome by little Tom Thumbkins, or some other smart little champion.

Yes; they were conquered in the end there is no doubt. They plunged headlong (and uttering the most frightful bad language) into some pit where Jack came with his smart *couteau de chasse*, and whipped their brutal heads off. They would be going to devour maidens,

“But ever when it seemed  
 Their need was at the sorest,  
 A knight, in armour bright,  
 Came riding through the forest.”

And down, after a combat, would go the brutal persecutor, with a lance through his midriff. Yes, I say, this is very true and well. But you remember



that round the ogre's cave the ground was covered, for hundreds and hundreds of yards, *with the bones of the victims* whom he had lured into the castle. Many knights and maids came to him and perished under his knife and teeth. Were dragons the same as ogres? monsters dwelling in caverns, whence they rushed, attired in plate armour, wielding pikes and torches, and destroying stray passengers who passed by their lair? Monsters, brutes, rapacious tyrants, ruffians, as they were, doubtless they ended by being overcome. But, before they were destroyed, they did a deal of mischief. The bones round their caves were countless. They had sent many brave souls to Hades, before their own fled, howling out of their rascal carcasses, to the same place of gloom.

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that fairies, champions, distressed damsels, and by consequence ogres, have ceased to exist. It may not be *ogreable* to them (pardon the horrible pleasantry, but as I am writing in the solitude of my chamber, I am grinding my teeth—yelling, roaring, and cursing—brandishing my scissors and paper-cutter and as it were have become an ogre). I say there is no greater mistake than to suppose that ogres have ceased to exist. We all *know* ogres. Their caverns are round us, and about us. There are the castles of several ogres within a mile of the spot where I write. I think some of them suspect I am an ogre myself. I am not, but I know they are. I visit them. I don't mean to say that they take a cold roast prince out of the cupboard, and have a cannibal feast before *me*. But I see the bones lying about the roads to their houses, and in the areas and gardens. Politeness, of course, prevents me from making any remarks: but I know

them well enough. One of the ways to know 'em is to watch the scared looks of the ogres' wives and children. They lead an awful life. They are present at dreadful cruelties. In their excesses those ogres will stab about and kill not only strangers who happen to call in and ask a night's lodging, but they will outrage, murder, and chop up their own kin. We all know ogres, I say, and have been in their dens often. It is not necessary that ogres who ask you to dine should offer their guests the *peculiar dish* which they like. They cannot always get a Tom Thumb family. They eat mutton and beef too; and I dare say even go out to tea, and invite you to drink it. But I tell you there are numbers of them going about in the world. And now you have my word for it, and this little hint, it is quite curious what an interest society may be made to have for you by your determining to find out the ogres you meet there.

What does the man mean? says Mrs. Downright, to whom a joke is a very grave thing. I mean, madam, that in the company assembled in your genteel drawing-room, who bow here and there, and smirk in white neckcloths, you receive men who elbow through life successfully enough, but who are ogres in private: men wicked, false, rapacious, flattering; cruel hectors at home, smiling courtiers abroad; causing wives, children, servants, parents, to tremble before them, and smiling and bowing, as they bid strangers welcome into their castles. I say, there are men who have crunched the bones of victim after victim; in whose closets lie skeletons picked frightfully clean. When these ogres come out into the world, you don't suppose they show their knives, and their great teeth? A neat simple white neckcloth, a

merry rather obsequious manner, a cadaverous look, perhaps, now and again, and a rather dreadful grin; but I know ogres very considerably respected: and when you hint to such and such a man, "My dear sir, Mr. Sharpus, whom you appear to like, is, I assure you, a most dreadful cannibal;" the gentleman cries, "Oh, psha, nonsense! Dare say not so black as he is painted. Dare say not worse than his neighbours." We condone everything in this country—private treason, falsehood, flattery, cruelty at home, roguery, and double-dealing. What! Do you mean to say in your acquaintance you don't know ogres guilty of countless crimes of fraud and force, and that knowing them you don't shake hands with them; dine with them at your table; and meet them at their own? Depend upon it in the time when there were real live ogres, in real caverns or castles, gobbling up real knights and virgins, when they went into the world—the neighbouring market-town, let us say, or earl's castle—though their nature and reputation were pretty well known, their notorious foibles were never alluded to. You would say, "What, Blunderbore, my boy! How do you do? How well and fresh you look! What's the receipt you have for keeping so young and rosy?" And your wife would softly ask after Mrs. Blunderbore and the dear children. Or it would be, "My dear Humguffin! try that pork. It is home-bred, home-fed, and, I promise you, tender. Tell me if you think it is as good as yours? John, a glass of burgundy to Colonel Humguffin!" You don't suppose there would be any unpleasant allusions to disagreeable home-reports regarding Humguffin's manner of furnishing his larder? I say we all of us know ogres.

We shake hands and dine with ogres. And if inconvenient moralists tell us we are cowards for our pains, we turn round with a *tu quoque*, or say that we don't meddle with other folk's affairs; that people are much less black than they are painted, and so on. What! Won't half the county go to Ogreham Castle? Won't some of the clergy say grace at dinner? Won't the mothers bring their daughters to dance with the young Rawheads? And if Lady Ogreham happens to die—I won't say to go the way of all flesh, that is too revolting—I say if Ogreham is a widower, do you aver, on your conscience and honour, that mothers will not be found to offer their young girls to supply the lamented lady's place? How stale this misanthropy is! Something must have disagreed with this cynic. Yes, my good woman. I dare say you would like to call another subject. Yes, my fine fellow; ogre at home, supple as a dancing-master abroad, and shaking in thy pumps, and wearing a horrible grin of sham gaiety to conceal thy terror, lest I should point thee out:—thou art prosperous and honoured, art thou? I say thou hast been a tyrant and a robber. Thou hast plundered the poor. Thou hast bullied the weak. Thou hast laid violent hands on the goods of the innocent and confiding. Thou hast made a prey of the meek and gentle who asked for thy protection. Thou hast been hard to thy kinsfolk, and cruel to thy family. Go, monster! Ah, when shall little Jack come and drill daylight through thy wicked cannibal carcass? I see the ogre pass on, bowing right and left to the company; and he gives a dreadful sidelong glance of suspicion as he is talking to my Lord Bishop in the corner there.

Ogres in our days need not be giants at all. In former times, and in children's books, where it is necessary to paint your moral in such large letters that there can be no mistake about it, ogres are made with that enormous mouth and *ratelier* which you know of, and with which they can swallow down a baby, almost without using that great knife which they always carry. They are too cunning nowadays. They go about in society, slim, small, quietly dressed, and showing no especially great appetite. In my own young days there used to be play ogres—men who would devour a young fellow in one sitting, and leave him without a bit of flesh on his bones. They were quiet gentlemanlike-looking people. They got the young fellow into their cave. Champagne, pâté-de-foie-gras, and numberless good things, were handed about; and then, having eaten, the young man was devoured in his turn. I believe these card and dice ogres have died away almost as entirely as the hasty-pudding giants whom Tom Thumb overcame. Now, there are ogres in City courts who lure you into their dens. About our Cornish mines I am told there are many most plausible ogres, who tempt you into their caverns and pick your bones there. In a certain newspaper there used to be lately a whole column of advertisements from ogres who would put on the most plausible, nay, piteous appearance, in order to inveigle their victims. You would read, "A tradesman, established for seventy years in the City, and known and much respected by Messrs. N. M. Rothschild and Baring Brothers, has pressing need for three pounds until next Saturday. He can give security for half a million, and forty thousand

pounds will be given for the use of the loan," and so on; or, "An influential body of capitalists are about to establish a company, of which the business will be enormous and the profits proportionately prodigious. They will require a SECRETARY, of good address and appearance, at a salary of two thousand per annum. He need not be able to write, but address and manners are absolutely necessary. As a mark of confidence in the company, he will have to deposit," &c.; or, "A young widow (of pleasing manners and appearance) who has a pressing necessity for four pounds ten for three weeks, offers her Erard's grand piano valued at three hundred guineas; a diamond cross of eight hundred pounds; and board and lodging in her elegant villa near Banbury Cross, with the best references and society, in return for the loan." I suspect these people are ogres. There are ogres and ogres. Polyphemus was a great, tall, one-eyed, notorious ogre, fetching his victims out of a hole, and gobbling them one after another. There could be no mistaking about him. But so were the Sirens ogres—pretty blue-eyed things, peeping at you coaxingly from out of the water, and singing their melodious wheedles. And the bones round their caves were more numerous than the ribs, skulls, and thigh-bones round the cavern of hulking Polypheme.

To the castle-gates of some of these monsters up rides the dapper champion of the pen; puffs boldly upon the horn which hangs by the chain; enters the hall resolutely, and challenges the big tyrant sulking within. We defy him to combat, the enormous roaring ruffian! We give him a meeting on the green plain before his castle. Green? No wonder it should be green: it is manured with human bones.

After a few graceful wheels and curvets, we take our ground. We stoop over our saddle. 'Tis but to kiss the locket of our lady-love's hair. And now the vizor is up: the lance is in rest (Gillott's iron is the point for me). A touch of the spur in the gallant sides of Pegasus, and we gallop at the great brute.

"Cut off his ugly head, Flibbertigibbet, my squire!" And who are these who pour out of the castle? the imprisoned maidens, the maltreated widows, the poor old hoary grandfathers, who have been locked up in the dungeons these scores and scores of years, writhing under the tyranny of that ruffian! Ah, ye knights of the pen! May honour be your shield, and truth tip your lances! Be gentle to all gentle people. Be modest to women. Be tender to children. And as for the Ogre Humbug, out sword and have at him.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY—*Roundabout Papers.*

## TARASCON

ON my way from Nîmes to Arles I spent three hours at Tarascon; chiefly for the love of Alphonse Daudet, who has written nothing more genial than "Les Aventures Prodigieuses de Tartarin," and the story of the "siege" of the bright, dead little town (a mythic siege by the Prussians) in the "Contes du Lundi." In the introduction which, for the new edition of his works, he has lately supplied to "Tartarin," the author of this extravagant but kindly satire gives some account of the displeasure with which he has been visited by the ticklish Tarasconnais. Daudet relates that in his attempt to shed a humorous light upon some of the more vivid phases of the Provençal character he selected Tarascon at a venture; not because the temperament of its natives is more vainglorious than that of their neighbours, or their rebellion against the "despotism of fact" more marked, but simply because he had to name a particular Provençal city. Tartarin is a hunter of lions and charmer of women, a true "produit du midi," as Daudet says, a character of the most extravagant, genial comedy. He is a minimized Don Quixote, with much less dignity but with equal good faith; and the story of his exploits is a little masterpiece of the free fantastic. The Tarasconnais, however, declined to take the joke, and opened the vials of their wrath upon the mocking child of Nîmes, who would have been better employed, they doubtless



thought, in showing up the infirmities of his own family. I am bound to add that when I passed through Tarascon they did not appear to be in the least out of humour. Nothing could have been brighter, easier, more suggestive of amiable indifference, than the picture it presented to my mind. It lies quietly beside the Rhone, looking across at Beaucaire, which seems very distant and independent, and tacitly consenting to let the castle of the good King René of Anjou, which projects very boldly into the river, pass for its most interesting feature. The other features are, primarily, a sort of vivid sleepiness in the aspect of the place, as if the September noon (it had lingered on into October) lasted longer there than elsewhere; certain low arcades which make the streets look grey and exhibit empty vistas; and a very curious and beautiful walk beside the Rhone, denominated the *Chaussée*—a long and narrow causeway, densely shaded by two rows of magnificent old trees planted in its embankment and rendered doubly effective at the moment I passed over it by a little train of collegians who had been taken out for mild exercise by a pair of young priests. Lastly one may say that a striking element of Tarascon, as of any town that lies on the Rhone, is simply the Rhone itself; the big brown flood, of uncertain temper, which has never taken time to forget that it is a child of the mountain and the glacier, and that such an origin carries with it great privileges. Later, at Avignon, I observed it in the exercise of these privileges, chief among which was that of frightening the good people of the old papal city half out of their wits.

The château of King René serves to-day as the prison of a district, and the traveller who wishes to

fragment, the whole place, with its position and its views, is an ineffaceable picture. It was the stronghold of the Montmorencys, and its last tenant was that rash Duke François whom Richelieu, seizing every occasion to trample on a great noble, caused to be beheaded at Toulouse, where he saw, in the Capitol, the butcher's knife with which the cardinal pruned the crown of France of its thorns. The castle, after the death of this victim, was virtually demolished. Its site, which nature to-day has taken again to herself, has an extraordinary charm. The mass of rock that it formerly covered rises high above the town and is as precipitous as the side of the Rhone. A tall, rusty iron gate admits you from a quiet corner of Beaucaire to a wild tangled garden covering the side of the hill—for the whole place forms the public promenade of the townsfolk—a garden without flowers, with little steep, rough paths that wind under a plantation of small, scrubby stone-pines. Above this is the grassy platform of the castle, enclosed on one side only (toward the river) by a large fragment of wall and a very massive dungeon. There are benches placed in the lee of the wall, and others on the edge of the platform, where one may enjoy a view, beyond the river, of certain peeled and scorched undulations. A sweet desolation, an everlasting peace, seemed to hang in the air. A very old man (a fragment, like the castle itself) emerged from some crumbling corner to do me the honours—a very gentle, obsequious, tottering, toothless, grateful old man. He beguiled me into an ascent of the solitary tower, from which you may look down on the big sallow river and glance at diminished Tarascon and the barefaced, bald-headed hills behind it. It may

appear that I insist too much upon the nudity of the Provençal horizon—too much considering that I have spoken of the prospect from the heights of Beaucaire as lovely. But it is an exquisite bareness; it seems to exist for the purpose of allowing one to follow the delicate lines of the hills and touch with the eyes, as it were, the smallest inflections of the landscape. It makes the whole thing wonderfully bright and pure.

Beaucaire used to be the scene of a famous fair, the great fair of the south of France. It has gone the way of most fairs, even in France, where these delightful exhibitions hold their own much better than might be supposed. It is still held in the month of July; but the bourgeois of Tarascon send to the Magasin du Louvre for their smart dresses, and the principal glory of the scene is its long tradition. Even now, however, it ought to be the prettiest of all fairs, for it takes place in a charming wood which lies just beneath the castle, beside the Rhone. The booths, the barracks, the platforms of the mountebanks, the bright-coloured crowd, diffused through this midsummer shade and spotted here and there with the rich Provençal sunshine, must be of the most pictorial effect. It is highly probable too that it offers a large collection of pretty faces; for even in the few hours that I spent at Tarascon I discovered symptoms of the purity of feature for which the women of the pays d'Arles are renowned. The Arlesian head-dress was visible in the streets; and this delightful coiffure is so associated with a charming facial oval, a dark mild eye, a straight Greek nose, and a mouth worthy of all the rest, that it conveys a presumption of beauty which gives the wearer time either to escape or to please you. I have read somewhere, however, that Tarascon is supposed to produce

handsome men, as Arles is known to deal in handsome women. It may be that I should have found the Tarasconnais very fine fellows if I had encountered enough specimens to justify an induction. But there are very few males in the streets, and the place presented no appearance of activity. Here and there the black coif of an old woman or of a young girl was framed by a low doorway; but for the rest, as I have said, Tarascon was mostly involved in a siesta. There was not a creature in the little church of Saint Martha, which I made a point of visiting before I returned to the station, and which, with its fine romanesque side-portal and its pointed and crocketed gothic spire, is as curious as it need be in view of its tradition. It stands in a quiet corner where the grass grows between the small cobblestones, and you pass beneath a deep archway to reach it. The tradition relates that Saint Martha tamed with her own hands and attached to her girdle a dreadful dragon who was known as the Tarasque and is reported to have given his name to the city on whose site (amid the rocks which form the base of the château) he had his cavern. The dragon perhaps is the symbol of a ravening paganism dispelled by the eloquence of a sweet evangelist. The bones of the interesting saint, at all events, were found, in the eleventh century, in a cave beneath the spot on which her altar now stands. I know not what had become of the bones of the dragon.

HENRY JAMES—*A Little Tour in France.*

## THE POEMS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

YESTERDAY, as the sun was very bright, and there was no wind, I took a fishing-rod on chance and Scott's poems, and rowed into the middle of St. Mary's Loch. Every hill, every tuft of heather was reflected in the lake, as in a silver mirror. There was no sound but the lapping of the water against the boat, the cry of the blackcock from the hill, and the pleasant splash of trout rising here and there. So I read "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" over again, here, in the middle of the scenes where the story is laid and where the fights were fought. For when the Baron went on pilgrimage,

"And took with him this elvish page  
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes,"

it was to the ruined chapel *here* that he came,

"For there, beside our Ladye's lake,  
An offering he had sworn to make,  
And he would pay his vows."

But his enemy, the Lady of Branksome, gathered a band

"Of the best that would ride at her command,"

and they all came from the country round. Branksome, where the lady lived, is twenty miles off, towards the south, across the ranges of lonely green hills. Harden, where her ally, Wat of Harden, abode,

is within twelve miles; and Deloraine, where William dwelt, is nearer still; and John of Thirlestane had his square tower in the heather, "where victual never grew," on Ettrick Water, within ten miles. These gentlemen, and their kinsfolk and retainers, being at feud with the Kers, tried to slay the Baron, in the Chapel of "Lone St. Mary of the Waves."

"They were three hundred spears and three.  
Through Douglas burn, up Yarrow stream,  
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.  
They came to St. Mary's Lake ere day;  
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.  
They burned the chapel for very rage,  
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's goblin-page."

The Scotts were a rough clan enough to burn a holy chapel because they failed to kill their enemy within the sacred walls. But, as I read again, for the twentieth time, Sir Walter's poem, floating on the lonely breast of the lake, in the heart of the hills where Yarrow flows, among the little green mounds that cover the ruins of chapel and castle and lady's bower, I asked myself whether Sir Walter was indeed a great and delightful poet, or whether he pleases me so much because I was born in his own country, and have one drop of the blood of his Border robbers in my own veins?

It is not always pleasant to go back to places, or to meet people, whom we have loved well, long ago. If they have changed little, we have changed much. The little boy, whose first book of poetry was "The Lady of the Lake," and who naturally believed that there was no poet like Sir Walter, is sadly changed into the man who has read most of the world's poets.

and who hears, on many sides, that Scott is outworn and doomed to deserved oblivion. Are they right or wrong, the critics who tell us, occasionally, that Scott's good novels make up for his bad verse, or that verse and prose, all must go? *Pro captu lectoris*, by the reader's taste, they stand or fall; yet even pessimism can scarcely believe that the Waverley Novels are mortal. They were once the joy of every class of minds; they cannot cease to be the joy of those who cling to the permanently good, and can understand and forgive lapses, carelessnesses, and the leisurely literary fashion of a former age. But, as to the poems, many give them up who cling to the novels. It does not follow that the poems are bad. In the first place, they are of two kinds—lyric and narrative. Now, the fashion of narrative in poetry has passed away for the present. The true Greek epics are read by a few in Greek; by perhaps fewer still in translations. But so determined are we not to read tales in verse, that prose renderings, even of the epics, nay, even of the Attic dramas, have come more or less into vogue. This accounts for the comparative neglect of Sir Walter's lays. They are spoken of as Waverley Novels spoiled. This must always be the opinion of readers who will not submit to stories in verse; it by no means follows that the verse is bad. If we make an exception, which we must, in favour of Chaucer, where is there better verse in story telling in the whole of English literature? The readers who despise "Marmion," or "The Lady of the Lake," do so because they dislike stories told in poetry. From poetry they expect other things, especially a lingering charm and magic of style, a reflective turn, "criticism of life." These things, except so far as life can be

criticized in action, are alien to the Muse of narrative. Stories and pictures are all she offers: Scott's pictures, certainly, are fresh enough, his tales are excellent enough, his manner is sufficiently direct. To take examples: every one who wants to read Scott's poetry should begin with the "Lay." From opening to close it never falters:—

"Nine and twenty knights of fame  
 Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;  
 Nine and twenty squires of name  
 Brought their steeds to bower from stall,  
 Nine and twenty yeomen tall  
 Waited, duteous, on them all. . . .  
 Ten of them were sheathed in steel,  
 With belted sword, and spur on heel;  
 They quitted not their harness bright  
 Neither by day nor yet by night:  
     They lay down to rest  
     With corslet laced,  
 Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;  
     They carved at the meal  
     With gloves of steel,  
 And they drank the red wine through the  
     helmet barred."

Now, is not that a brave beginning? Does not the verse clank and chime like sword sheath on spur, like the bits of champing horses? Then, when William of Deloraine is sent on his lonely midnight ride across the haunted moors and wolds, does the verse not gallop like the heavy armoured horse?

"Unchallenged, thence passed Deloraine,  
 To ancient Riddell's fair domain,  
 Where Aill, from mountains freed,  
 Down from the lakes did raving come;



Each wave was crested with tawny foam,  
 Like the mane of a chestnut steed  
 In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,  
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road;  
 At the first plunge the horse sunk low,  
 And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow."

These last two lines have the very movement and note, the deep heavy plunge, the still swirl of the water. Well I know the lochs whence Aill comes red in flood; many a trout have I taken in Aill, long ago. This, of course, causes a favourable prejudice, a personal bias towards admiration. But I think the poetry itself is good, and stirs the spirit, even of those who know not Ailmoor, the mother of Aill, that lies dark among the melancholy hills.

The spirit is stirred throughout by the chivalry and the courage of Scott's men and of his women. Thus the Lady of Branksome addresses the English invaders who have taken her boy prisoner:—

"For the young heir of Branksome's line,  
 God be his aid, and God be mine;  
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom;  
 Here, while I live, no foe finds room.  
 Then if thy Lords their purpose urge,  
 Take our defiance loud and high;  
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,  
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

Ay, and though the minstrel says he is no love poet, and though, indeed, he shines more in war than in lady's bower, is not this a noble stanza on true love, and worthy of what old Malory writes in his "Mort d'Arthur"? Because here Scott speaks for himself,

and of his own unhappy and immortal affection:—

“True love’s the gift which God has given  
To man alone beneath the Heaven.  
It is not Fantasy’s hot fire,  
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;  
*It liveth not in fierce desire,  
With dead desire it doth not die:*  
It is the secret sympathy,  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
Which heart to heart and mind to mind,  
In body and in soul can bind.”

Truth and faith, courage and chivalry, a free life in the hills and by the streams, a shrewd brain, an open heart, a kind word for friend or foeman, these are what you learn from the “Lay,” if you want to learn lessons from poetry. It is a rude legend, perhaps, as the critics said at once, when critics were disdainful of wizard priests and ladies magical. But it is a deathless legend, I hope; it appeals to every young heart that is not early spoiled by low cunning, and cynicism, and love of gain. The minstrel’s own prophecy is true, and still, and always,

“Yarrow, as he rolls along,  
Bears burden to the minstrel’s song.”

After the “Lay” came “Marmion, a Tale of Flodden Field.” It is far more ambitious and complicated than the “Lay,” and is not much worse written. Sir Walter was ever a rapid and careless poet, and as he took more pains with his plot, he took less with his verse. His friends reproved him, but he answered to one of them—

“Since oft thy judgment could refine  
My flattened thought and cumbrous line,

Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,  
 And in the minstrel spare the friend:  
*Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,  
 Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my tale!*

Anyone who knows Scott's country knows how cloud and stream and gale all sweep at once down the valley of Ettrick or of Tweed. West wind, wild cloud, red river, they pour forth as by one impulse—forth from the far-off hills. He let his verse sweep out in the same stormy sort, and many a "cumbrous line," many a "flattened thought," you may note, if you will, in "Marmion." For example—

"And think what he must next have felt,  
 At buckling of the falchion belt."

The "Lay" is a tale that only verse could tell; much of "Marmion" might have been told in prose, and most of "Rokeby." But prose could never give the picture of Edinburgh, nor tell the tale of Flodden Fight in "Marmion," which I verily believe is the best battle-piece in all the poetry of all time, better even than the stand of Aias by the ships in the Iliad, better than the slaying of the Wooers in the Odyssey. Nor could prose give us the hunting of the deer and the long gallop over hillside and down valley, with which the "Lady of the Lake" begins, opening thereby the enchanted gates of the Highlands to the world. "The Lady of the Lake," except in the battle-piece, is told in a less rapid metre than that of the "Lay," less varied than that of "Marmion." "Rokeby" lives only by its songs; the "Lord of the Isles" by Bannockburn, the "Field of Waterloo" by the repulse of the Cuirassiers. But all the poems are interspersed with songs and ballads, as the beautiful ballad of

"Alice Brand"; and Scott's fame rests on *these* far more than on his later versified romances. Coming immediately after the very tamest poets who ever lived, like Hayley, Scott wrote songs and ballads as wild and free, as melancholy or gay, as ever shepherd sang, or gipsy carolled, or witch-wife moaned, or old forgotten minstrel left to the world, music with no maker's name. For example, take the Outlaw's rhyme—

"With burnished brand and musketoon,  
 So gallantly you come,  
 I read you for a bold dragoon  
 That lists the tuck of drum.  
 I list no more the tuck of drum,  
 No more the trumpet hear;  
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,  
 My comrades take the spear.  
 And, oh, though Brignal banks be fair,  
 And Greta woods be gay,  
 Yet mickle must the maiden dare,  
 Would reign my Queen of May!"

How musical, again, is this!—

"This morn is merry June, I trow,  
 The rose is budding fain;  
 But she shall bloom in winter snow,  
 Ere we two meet again.  
 He turned his charger as he spake,  
 Upon the river shore,  
 He gave his bridle-reins a shake,  
 Said, 'Adieu for evermore,  
 My love!  
 Adieu for evermore!'"

Turning from the legends in verse, let it not be forgotten that Scott was a great lyrical poet. Mr.

Palgrave is not too lenient a judge, and his "Golden Treasury" is a touch-stone, as well as a treasure, of poetic gold. In this volume Wordsworth contributes more lyrics than any other poet: Shelley and Shakespeare come next; then Sir Walter. For my part I would gladly sacrifice a few of Wordsworth's for a few more of Scott's. But this may be prejudice. Mr. Palgrave is not prejudiced, and we see how high is his value for Sir Walter.

There are scores of songs in his works, touching and sad, or gay as a hunter's waking, that tell of lovely things lost by tradition, and found by him on the moors: all these—not prized by Sir Walter himself—are in his gift, and in that of no other man. For example, his "Eve of St. John" is simply a masterpiece, a ballad among ballads. Nothing but an old song moves us like—

"Are these the links o' Forth, she said,  
Are these the crooks o' Dee!"

He might have done more of the best, had he very greatly cared. Alone among poets, he had neither vanity nor jealousy; he thought little of his own verse and his own fame: would that he had thought more! would that he had been more careful of what was so precious! But he turned to prose; bade poetry farewell.

"Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp,  
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway.  
*And little reck I of the censure sharp  
May idly cavil at an idle lay."*

People still cavil idly, complaining that Scott did not finish, or did not polish his pieces; that he was

not Keats, or was not Wordsworth. He was himself; he was the Last Minstrel, the latest, the greatest, the noblest of natural poets concerned with natural things. He sang of free, fierce, and warlike life, of streams yet rich in salmon, and moors not yet occupied by brewers; of lonely places haunted in the long grey twilights of the North; of crumbling towers where once dwelt the Lady of Branksome or the Flower of Yarrow. Nature summed up in him many a past age, a world of ancient faiths; and before the great time of Britain wholly died, to Britain, as to Greece, she gave her Homer. When he was old, and tired, and near his death—so worn with trouble and labour that he actually signed his own name wrong—he wrote his latest verse, for a lady. It ends—

“My country, be thou glorious still!”

and so he died, within the sound of the whisper of Tweed, foreseeing the years when his country would no more be glorious, thinking of his country only, forgetting quite the private sorrow of his own later days.

People will tell you that Scott was not a great poet; that his bolt is shot, his fame perishing. Little he cared for his fame! But for my part I think and hope that Scott can never die, till men grow up into manhood without ever having been boys—till they forget that

“One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name!”

Thus, the charges against Sir Walter's poetry are, on the whole, little more than the old critical fallacy of blaming a thing for not being something else. “It takes all sorts to make a world,” in poetry as in life

Sir Walter's sort is a very good sort, and in English literature its place was empty, and waiting for him. Think of what he did. English poetry had long been very tame and commonplace, written in couplets like Pope's, very artificial and smart, or sensible and slow. He came with poems of which the music seemed to gallop, like thundering hoofs and ringing bridles of a rushing border troop. Here were goblin, ghost, and fairy, fight and foray, fair ladies and true lovers, gallant knights and hard blows, blazing beacons on every hill crest and on the bartisan of every tower. Here was a world made alive again that had been dead for three hundred years—a world of men and women.

They say that the archæology is not good. Archæology is a science; in its application to poetry, Scott was its discoverer. Others can name the plates of a coat of armour more learnedly than he, but he made men wear them. They call his Gothic art false, his armour pasteboard; but he put living men under his castled roofs, living men into his breastplates and taslets. Science advances, old knowledge becomes ignorance; it is poetry that does not die, and that will not die, while—

“The triple pride  
Of Eildon looks over Strathclyde.”

ANDREW LANG—*Essays in Little.*

## FALSTAFF

THERE is more material for a life of Falstaff than for a life of Shakespeare, though for both there is a lamentable dearth. The difficulties of the biographer are, however, different in the two cases. There is nothing, or next to nothing, in Shakespeare's works which throws light on his own story; and such evidence as we have is of the kind called circumstantial. But Falstaff constantly gives us reminiscences or allusions to his earlier life, and his companions also tell us stories which ought to help us in a biography. The evidence, such as it is, is direct; and the only inference we have to draw is that from the statement to the truth of the statement.

It has been justly remarked by Sir James Stephen, that this very inference is perhaps the most difficult one of all to draw correctly. The inference from so-called circumstantial evidence, if you have enough of it, is much surer; for whilst facts cannot lie, witnesses can, and frequently do. The witnesses on whom we have to rely for the facts are Falstaff and his companions—especially Falstaff.

When an old man tries to tell you the story of his youth, he sees the facts through a distorting subjective medium, and gives an impression of his history and exploits more or less at variance with the bare facts as seen by a contemporary outsider. The scientific Goethe, though truthful enough in the main, certainly fails in his reminiscences to tell a plain



unvarnished tale. And Falstaff was *not* habitually truthful. Indeed, that Western American, who wrote affectionately on the tomb of a comrade, "As a truth-crusher he was unrivalled," had probably not given sufficient attention to Falstaff's claims in this matter. Then Falstaff's companions are not witnesses above suspicion. Generally speaking, they lie open to the charge made by P. P. against the wags of his parish, that they were men delighting more in their own conceits than in the truth. These are some of our difficulties, and we ask the reader's indulgence in our endeavours to overcome them. We will tell the story from our hero's birth, and will not begin longer *before* that event than is usual with biographers.

The question, *Where* was Falstaff born? has given us some trouble. We confess to having once entertained a strong opinion that he was a Devonshire man. This opinion was based simply on the flow and fertility of his wit as shown in his conversation, and the rapid and fantastic play of his imagination. But we sought in vain for any verbal provincialisms in support of this theory, and there was something in the character of the man that rather went against it. Still, we clung to the opinion, till we found that philology was against us, and that the Falstaffs unquestionably came from Norfolk.

The name is of Scandinavian origin; and we find in "Domesday" that a certain Falstaff held freely from the king a church at Stamford. These facts are of great importance. The thirst for which Falstaff was always conspicuous was no doubt inherited—was, in fact, a Scandinavian thirst. The pirates of early English times drank as well as they fought, and their descendants who invade England—now that the war

of commerce has superseded the war of conquest—still bring the old thirst with them, as anyone can testify who has enjoyed the hospitality of the London Scandinavian Club. Then this church was no doubt a familiar landmark in the family; and when Falstaff stated, late in life, that if he hadn't forgotten what the inside of a church was like, he was a peppercorn and a brewer's horse, he was thinking with some remorse of the family temple.

Of the family between the Conquest and Falstaff's birth we know nothing, except that, according to Falstaff's statement, he had a grandfather who left him a seal-ring worth forty marks. From this statement we might infer that the ring was an heirloom, and consequently that Falstaff was an eldest son, and the head of his family. But we must be careful in drawing our inferences, for Prince Henry frequently told Falstaff that the ring was copper; and on one occasion, when Falstaff alleged that his pocket had been picked at the Boar's Head, and this seal-ring and three or four bonds of forty pounds apiece abstracted, the Prince assessed the total loss at eightpence.

After giving careful attention to the evidence, and particularly to the conduct of Falstaff on the occasion of the alleged robbery, we come to the conclusion that the ring *was* copper, and was not an heirloom. This leaves us without any information about Falstaff's family prior to his birth. He was born (as he himself informs the Lord Chief Justice) about three o'clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something a round belly. Falstaff's corpulence, therefore, as well as his thirst, was congenital. Let those who are not born with his comfortable figure sigh in

vain to attain his stately proportions. This is a thing which Nature gives us at our birth as much as the Scandinavian thirst or the shaping spirit of imagination.

Born somewhere in Norfolk, Falstaff's early months and years were no doubt rich with the promise of his after greatness. We have no record of his infancy, and are tempted to supply the gap with Rabelais' chapters on Gargantua's babyhood. But regard for the truth compels us to add nothing that cannot fairly be deduced from the evidence. We leave the strapping boy in his swaddling-clothes to answer the question *when* he was born. Now, it is to be regretted that Falstaff, who was so precise about the hour of his birth, should not have mentioned the year. On this point we are again left to inference from conflicting statements. We have this distinct point to start from, that Falstaff, in or about the year 1401, gives his age as some fifty or by'r Lady inclining to three-score. It is true that in other places he represents himself as old, and again in another states that he and his accomplices in the Gadshill robbery are in the vaward of their youth. The Chief Justice reproves him for his affectation of youth, and puts a question (which, it is true, elicits no admission from Falstaff) as to whether every part of him is not blasted with antiquity.

We are inclined to think that Falstaff rather understated his age when he described himself as by'r Lady inclining to three-score, and that we shall not be far wrong if we set down 1340 as the year of his birth. We cannot be certain to a year or two. There is a similar uncertainty about the year of Sir Richard Whittington's birth. But both these great

men, whose careers afford in some respects striking contrasts, were born within a few years of the middle of the fourteenth century.

Falstaff's childhood was no doubt spent in Norfolk; and we learn from his own lips that he plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, and that he did not escape beating. That he had brothers and sisters we know; for he tells us that he is *John* with them and *Sir John* with all Europe. We do not know the dame or pedant who taught his young idea how to shoot and formed his manners; but Falstaff says that *if* his manners became him not, he was a fool that taught them him. This does not throw much light on his early education: for it is not clear that the remark applies to that period, and in any case it is purely hypothetical.

But Falstaff, like so many boys since his time, left his home in the country and came to London. His brothers and sisters he left behind him, and we hear no more of them. Probably none of them ever attained eminence, and there is no record of Falstaff's having attempted to borrow money of them. We know Falstaff so well as a tun of a man, a horse-back-breaker, and so forth, that it is not easy to form an idea of what he was in his youth. But if we trace back the sack-stained current of his life to the day when, full of wonder and hope, he first rode into London, we shall find him as different from Shakespeare's picture of him as the Thames at Iffley is from the Thames at London Bridge. His figure was shapely; he had no difficulty *then* in seeing his own knee, and if he was not able, as he afterwards asserted, to creep through an alderman's ring, nevertheless he had all the grace and activity of youth.

He was just such a lad (to take a description almost contemporary) as the Squier who rode with the Canterbury Pilgrims:

"A lover and a lusty bachelor,  
With lockes crull as they were laid in presse,  
Of twenty yere of age he was, I gesse.  
Of his stature he was of even lengthe,  
And wonderly deliver, and grete of strengthe.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede,  
All ful of freshe floures, white and rede;  
Singing he was, or floyting alle the day,  
He was as freshe as is the moneth of May.  
Short was his goune, with sleeves long and wide,  
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride,  
He coude songes make, and wel endite,  
Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie and write.  
So hot he loved that by nightertale,  
He slep no more than doth the nightingale."

Such was Falstaff at the age of twenty, or something earlier, when he entered at Clement's Inn, where were many other young men reading law, and preparing for their call to the Bar. How much law he read it is impossible now to ascertain. That he had, in later life, a considerable knowledge of the subject is clear, but this may have been acquired like Mr. Micawber's, by experience, as defendant on civil process. We are inclined to think he read but little. *Amici fures temporis*: and he had many friends at Clement's Inn who were not smugs, nor indeed, reading men in any sense. There was John Doit of Staffordshire, and Black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man, and Robert Shallow from Gloucestershire. Four of these

were such swinge-bucklers as were not to be found again in all the Inns o' Court, and we have it on the authority of Justice Shallow that Falstaff was a good backswordsman, and that before he had done growing he broke the head of Skogan at the Court gate. This Skogan appears to have been Court-jester to Edward III. No doubt the natural rivalry between the amateur and the professional caused the quarrel, and Skogan must have been a good man if he escaped with a broken head only, and without damage to his reputation as a professional wit. The same day that Falstaff did this deed of daring—the only one of the kind recorded of him—Shallow fought with Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Shallow was a gay dog in his youth, according to his own account: he was called Mad Shallow, Lusty Shallow—indeed, he was called anything. He played Sir Dagonet in Arthur's Show at Mile End Green; and no doubt Falstaff and the rest of the set were cast for other parts in the same pageant. These tall fellows of Clement's Inn kept well together, for they liked each other's company, and they needed each other's help in a row in Turnbull Street or elsewhere. Their watchword was "Hem, boys!" and they made the old Strand ring with their songs as they strolled home to their chambers of an evening. They heard the chimes at midnight—which, it must be confessed, does not seem to us a desperately dissipated entertainment. But midnight was a late hour in those days. The paralytic masher of the present day, who is most alive at midnight, rises at noon. *Then* the day began earlier with a long morning, followed by a pleasant period called the forenoon. Under modern conditions we spend the morning in bed, and to

palliate our sloth call the forenoon and most of the rest of the day, the morning. These young men of Clement's Inn were a lively, not to say a rowdy set. They would do anything that led to mirth or mischief. What passed when they lay all night in the windmill in St. George's Field we do not quite know; but we are safe in assuming that they did not go there to pursue their legal duties, or to grind corn. Anyhow, forty years after, that night raised pleasant memories.

John Falstaff was the life and centre of this set, as Robert Shallow was the butt of it. The latter had few personal attractions. According to Falstaff's portrait of him he looked like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring. When he was naked he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife: he was so forlorn that his dimensions to any thick sight were invincible: he was the very genius of famine: and a certain section of his friends called him mandrake: he came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the over-scuthed huswives that he heard the carmen whistle, and sware they were his fancies or his good-nights. Then he had the honour of having his head burst by John o' Gaunt, for crowding among the Marshal's men in the Tilt-yard, and this was matter for continual gibe from Falstaff and the other boys. Falstaff was in the van of the fashion, was witty himself without being at that time the cause that wit was in others. No one could come within range of his wit without being attracted and overpowered. Late in life Falstaff deplores nothing so much in the character of Prince John of Lancaster as this, that a man cannot make him laugh.

He felt this defect in the Prince's character keenly, for laughter was Falstaff's familiar spirit, which never failed to come at his call. It was by laughter that young Falstaff fascinated his friends and ruled over them. There are only left to us a few scraps of his conversation, and these have been, and will be, to all time the delight of all good men. The Clement's Inn boys, who enjoyed the feast, of which we have but the crumbs left to us, were happy almost beyond the lot of man. For there is more in laughter than is allowed by the austere, or generally recognized by the jovial. By laughter man is distinguished from the beasts, but the cares and sorrows of life have all but deprived man of this distinguishing grace, and degraded him to a brutal solemnity. Then comes (alas, how rarely!) a genius such as Falstaff's, which restores the power of laughter and transforms the stolid brute into man. This genius approaches nearly to the divine power of creation, and we may truly say, "Some for less were deified." It is no marvel that young Falstaff's friends assiduously served the deity who gave them this good gift. At first he was satisfied with the mere exercise of his genial power, but he afterwards made it serviceable to him. It was but just that he should receive tribute from those who were beholden to him for a pleasure which no other could confer.

It was now that Falstaff began to recognize what a precious gift was his congenital Scandinavian thirst, and to lose no opportunity of gratifying it. We have his mature views on education, and we may take them as an example of the general truth that old men habitually advise a young one to shape the conduct of his life after their own. Rightly to appre-



hend the virtues of sherris-sack is the first qualification in an instructor of youth. "If I had a thousand sons," says he, "the first humane principles I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack"; and further: "There's never none of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so over-cool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green sickness; and then when they marry they get wenches: they are generally fools and cowards, which some of us should be too but for inflammation." There can be no doubt that Falstaff did not in early life over-cool his blood, but addicted himself to sack, and gave the subject a great part of his attention for all the remainder of his days.

It may be that he found the subject too absorbing to allow of his giving much attention to old Father Antic the Law. At any rate, he was never called to the Bar, and posterity cannot be too thankful that his great mind was not lost in "the abyss of legal eminence" which has received so many men who might have adorned their country. That he was fitted for a brilliant legal career can admit of no doubt. His power of detecting analogies in cases apparently different, his triumphant handling of cases apparently hopeless, his wonderful readiness in reply, and his dramatic instinct, would have made him a powerful advocate. It may have been owing to difficulties with the Benchers of the period over questions of discipline, or it may have been a distaste for the profession itself, which induced him to throw up the law and adopt the profession of arms.

We know that while he was still at Clement's Inn he was page to Lord Thomas Mowbray, who was

afterwards created Earl of Nottingham and Duke of Norfolk. It must be admitted that here (as elsewhere in Shakespeare) there is some little chronological difficulty. We will not inquire too curiously, but simply accept the testimony of Justice Shallow on the point. Mowbray was an able and ambitious lord, and Falstaff, as page to him, began his military career with every advantage. The French wars of the later years of Edward III gave frequent and abundant opportunity for distinction. Mowbray distinguished himself in Court and in camp, and we should like to believe that Falstaff was in the sea-fight when Mowbray defeated the French fleet and captured vast quantities of sack from the enemy. Unfortunately, there is no record whatever of Falstaff's early military career, and beyond his own ejaculation, "Would to God that my name was not so terrible to the enemy as it is!" and the (possible) inference from it that he must have made his name terrible in some way, we have no evidence that he was ever in the field before the battle of Shrewsbury. Indeed, the absence of evidence on this matter goes strongly to prove the negative. Falstaff boasts of his valour, his alacrity, and other qualities which were not apparent to the casual observer, but he never boasts of his services in battle. If there had been anything of the kind to which he could refer with complacency, there is no moral doubt that he would have mentioned it freely, adding such embellishments and circumstances as he well knew how.

In the absence of evidence as to the course of his life, we are left to conjecture how he spent the forty years, more or less, between the time of his studies at Clement's Inn and the day when Shakespeare intro-

duces him to us. We have no doubt that he spent all, or nearly all, this time in London. His habits were such as are formed by life in a great city: his conversation betrays a man who has lived, as it were, in a crowd, and the busy haunts of men were the appropriate scene for the display of his great qualities. London, even then, was a great city, and the study of it might well absorb a lifetime. Falstaff knew it well, from the Court, with which he always preserved a connection, to the numerous taverns where he met his friends and eluded his creditors. The Boar's Head in Eastcheap was his headquarters, and, like Barnabee's, two centuries later, his journeys were from tavern to tavern; and, like Barnabee, he might say "*Multum bibi, nunquam pransi.*" To begin with, no doubt the dinner bore a fair proportion to the fluid which accompanied it, but by degrees the liquor encroached on and superseded the viands, until his tavern bills took the shape of the one purloined by Prince Henry, in which there was but one halfpenny-worth of bread to an intolerable deal of sack. It was this inordinate consumption of sack (and not sighing and grief, as he suggests) which blew him up like a bladder. A life of leisure in London always had, and still has, its temptations. Falstaff's means were described by the Chief Justice of Henry IV as very slender, but this was after they had been wasted for years. Originally they were more ample, and gave him the opportunity of living at ease with his friends. No domestic cares disturbed the even tenor of his life. Bardolph says he was better accommodated than with a wife. Like many another man about town, he thought about settling down when he was getting up in years. He weekly swore, so he tells us, to marry

old Mistress Ursula, but this was only after he saw the first white hair on his chin. But he never led Mistress Ursula to the altar. The only other women for whom he formed an early attachment were Mistress Quickly, the hostess of the Boar's Head, and Doll Tearsheet, who is described by the page as a proper gentlewoman, and a kinswoman of his master's. There is no denying that Falstaff was on terms of intimacy with Mistress Quickly, but he never admitted that he made her an offer of marriage. She, however, asserted it in the strongest terms, and with a wealth of circumstance.

We must transcribe her story: "Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the Prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor; thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call me Gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone downstairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath; deny it if thou canst!"

We feel no doubt that if Mistress Quickly had given this evidence in action for breach of promise of marriage, and goodwife Keech corroborated it, the

jury would have found a verdict for the plaintiff, unless indeed they brought in a special verdict to the effect that Falstaff made the promise, but never intended to keep it. But Mistress Quickly contented herself with upbraiding Falstaff, and he cajoled her with his usual skill, and borrowed more money of her.

Falstaff's attachment for Doll Tearsheet lasted many years, but did not lead to matrimony. From the Clement's Inn days till he was three-score he lived in London celibate, and his habits and amusements were much like those of other single gentlemen about town of his time, or, for that matter, of ours. He had only himself to care for, and he cared for himself well. Like his page, he had a good angel about him, but the devil outbid him. He was as virtuously given as other folk, but perhaps the devil had a handle for temptation in that congenital thirst of his. He was a social spirit too, and he tells us that company, villainous company, was the spoil of him. He was less than thirty when he took the faithful Bardolph into his service, and only just past that age when he made the acquaintance of the nimble Poins. Before he was forty he became the constant guest of Mistress Quickly. Pistol and Nym were later acquisitions, and the Prince did not come upon the scene till Falstaff was an old man and knighted.

There is some doubt as to when he obtained this honour. Richard II bestowed titles in so lavish a manner as to cause discontent among many who didn't receive them. In 1377, immediately on his accession, the earldom of Nottingham was given to Thomas Mowbray, and on the same day three other earls and nine knights were created. We have not

been able to discover the names of these knights, but we confidently expect to unearth them some day, and to find the name of Sir John Falstaff among them. We have already stated that Falstaff had done no service in the field at this time, so he could not have earned his title in that manner. No doubt he got it through the influence of Mowbray, who was in a position to get good things for his friends as well as for himself. It was but a poor acknowledgment for the inestimable benefit of occasionally talking with Falstaff over a quart of sack.

We will not pursue Falstaff's life further than this. It can from this point be easily collected. It is a thankless task to paraphrase a great and familiar text. To attempt to tell the story in better words than Shakespeare would occur to no one but Miss Braddon, who has epitomized Sir Walter, or to Canon Farrar, who has elongated the Gospels. But we feel bound to add a few words as to character. There are, we fear, a number of people who regard Falstaff as a worthless fellow, and who would refrain (if they could) from laughing at his jests. These people do not understand his claim to grateful and affectionate regard. He did more to produce that mental condition of which laughter is the expression than any man who ever lived. But for the cheering presence of him, and men like him, this vale of tears would be a more terrible dwelling-place than it is. In short, Falstaff has done an immense deal to alleviate misery and promote positive happiness. What more can be said of your heroes and philanthropists?

It is, perhaps, characteristic of this commercial age that benevolence should be always associated, if not considered synonymous, with the giving of money.

But this is clearly mistaken, for we have to consider what effect the money given produces on the minds and bodies of human beings. Sir Richard Whittington was an eminently benevolent man, and spent his money freely for the good of his fellow-citizens. (We sincerely hope, by the way, that he lent some of it to Falstaff without security.) He endowed hospitals and other charities. Hundreds were relieved by his gifts, and thousands (perhaps) are now in receipt of his alms. This is well. Let the sick and the poor, who enjoy his hospitality and receive his doles, bless his memory. But how much wider and further-reaching is the influence of Falstaff! Those who enjoy his good things are not only the poor and the sick, but all who speak the English language. Nay, more; translation has made him the inheritance of the world, and the benefactor of the entire human race.

It may be, however, that some other nations fail fully to understand and appreciate the mirth and the character of the man. A Dr. G. G. Gervinus, of Heidelberg, has written, in the German language, a heavy work on Shakespeare, in which he attacks Falstaff in a very solemn and determined manner, and particularly charges him with selfishness and want of conscience. We are inclined to set down this malignant attack to envy. Falstaff is the author and cause of universal laughter. Dr. Gervinus will never be the cause of anything universal; but, so far as his influence extends, he produces headaches. It is probably a painful sense of this contrast that goads on the author of headaches to attack the author of laughter.

But is there anything in the charge? We do not

claim anything like perfection, or even saintliness, for Falstaff. But we may say of him, as Byron says of Venice, that his very vices are of the gentler sort. And as for this charge of selfishness and want of conscience, we think that the words of Bardolph on his master's death are an overwhelming answer to it. Bardolph said, on hearing the news: "I would I were with him wheresoever he is: whether he be in heaven or hell." Bardolph was a mere serving-man, not of the highest sensibility, and he for thirty years knew his master as his valet knows the hero. Surely the man who could draw such an expression of feeling from his rough servant is not the man to be lightly charged with selfishness! Which of us can hope for such an epitaph, not from a hireling, but from our nearest and dearest? Does Dr. Gervinus know anyone who will make such a reply to a posthumous charge against him of dulness and lack of humour?

SIR G. H. RADFORD—contributed to  
Augustine Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*.



## A CYNIC'S APOLOGY

THERE are certain outcasts of humanity—pariahs to whom the most benevolent of mankind refuse to extend a helping hand—misshapen cripples in soul, who are displayed by some cruel demonstrator, like specimens in bottles at a medical museum, to illustrate the disastrous consequences of grievous moral disease;—and of these unfortunates I confess myself to be one. I seldom enter a church, or attend a public meeting, without hearing myself held up to execration—not by name, but by reputation—as the heartless cynic, the man who sits in the seat of the scorners, or the rightful owner of some other opprobrious title drawn from profane or sacred sources. In short, I am a person given to rather dyspeptic views of things, inclined to look at the seamy side of the world, and much more ready to laugh at a new actor than to go wild with enthusiasm over his performance. Now I freely admit that for the most part the preachers are perfectly right. Undoubtedly enthusiasm is the most essential of all qualities, if not the one thing needful. It prevents the world from sinking into a stagnant and putrefying pool. We could not improve, nor even remain in a stationary position without it. And, what is more, the preachers are justified in giving a rather exaggerated prominence to the enthusiastic view of life; for mankind is much more in want of the spur than of the curb. Let them encourage any number of young St.

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Georges to mount and ride forth in search of a dragon; for though in real life the dragon breed is probably extinct since the days of the pterodactyle, it will be some time before we shall want game-laws to protect dragons of the metaphorical kind, or be able to dispense with the services of any St. George that may enlist. Yet, after all, there is another side of things which we may sometimes remember when we are beyond the charmed circle of pulpit eloquence. A clergyman does well to insist chiefly upon the necessity of self-denial; but it does not follow that we should never have a taste of cakes and ale. As, indeed, we are ready enough for the most part to take our meals regularly without special encouragement, our teachers do not insist upon the necessity of our eating and drinking and indulging in an occasional festivity. They trust to the unaided propensities of our nature to secure the proper discharge of those functions, and are content to throw their whole weight upon the side of restraining our excesses. For a similar reason, I presume, we are never told that we ought sometimes to laugh at our neighbours, to throw cold water upon their zeal, and to pick holes in their favourite little projects for the reform of humanity. It is imagined that that duty may be safely left to the unprompted malevolence of our nature, of which it is presumed that there will be a sufficient crop after every diligence has been used in pruning it down. Now here, I venture to suggest, there is an omission in the common run of exhortation. There is, as I shall try to prove, a certain useful piece of work to be done, and if we are content simply to denounce those who do it, it will, of course, be done in a bad spirit and from malevolent

motives. I claim no lofty mission for the cynic; and I merely suggest that, like mosquitoes, they are part of the economy of nature. One of Lincoln's apologues—of which the original application matters little—told how he and his brother were once ploughing on a Kentucky farm: the horse was going at an unusually good pace, when Lincoln knocked off a huge "chin-fly" that was fastened to his hide. "What did you do that for?" exclaimed his brother. "That's all that made him go." The whole of my claim for cynics is that they act at times the part of "chin-fly" on the pachydermatous population of the world. If we rashly attempt to crush them out of existence, we only make them more spiteful than before, and may not improbably discover that, like other vermin, they do some dirty work, which is not the essential to our comfort. The most ingenious of the socialist theorizers maintained that men who did particularly unpleasant services to mankind, should be rewarded by being held in special honour, instead of being shunned as is usual in our imperfect society. Scavengers and chimney-sweeps, for example, would have some compensation for groping in filth by occupying at other times the best seats in public places. I do not go so far as this. I am content to be trodden under foot (in spirit only) by innumerable preachers—and perhaps it does not want much courage to bear the satire of ordinary sermons: they may spit upon my gaberdine, and call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, as much as they like. I shall never desire to cut off a pound of their flesh; I would, at most, retaliate, like poor old Shylock, by some harmless abuse, and invite them, not (as I might) to be grateful, but to remember that I too, like venomous

reptiles, have a certain place in the world. To explain this a little more in detail, let us consider one or two particular cases. Thus, for example, everyone who has reached a certain time of life has been annoyed by a peculiar race, known amongst its own members as the "earnest," and to the rest of mankind as prigs. It is notoriously difficult even for naturalists to trace out the identity of certain creatures who vary very much at different stages of their development. A man who remembers the companions of his university career, is sometimes amazed at the number of enthusiastic clergymen and respectable lawyers who at a later period claim to have been among his contemporaries, and wonders from what new material this finished product has been constructed. Gradually he finds that a stout boating-man, whose talk was of bumping, and whose food was of bleeding beefsteak, has fined down into an ascetic priest; or that a cadaverous mathematical student has blossomed into a rubicund lawyer. Now the case of the prig is the reverse of this. He is a specimen of arrested development. Instead of being modified by the atmosphere of the outside world, he has carried into it all the simplicity characteristic of his earliest manhood. There is something refreshing and even elevating about the spectacle of these harmless enthusiasts. They carry us back to the time when the sight of our names in a class-list produced a feeling of ineffable pride, and a fellowship seemed more glorious than a seat in the Cabinet. There is upon this earth no person who surveys mankind "from China to Peru" with a more exquisite sense of perfect complacency than the young gentleman who has just put on his bachelor's hood. Early donhood, if I may so

call it, is the time of life at which nature assists us by throwing out an abnormal development of self-esteem, as the marmot grows fat to strengthen him against the approach of winter. The Union is still to our minds an assembly whose debates reverberate throughout the empire; to row in the university eight is an honour worth the sacrifice certainly of learning, and possibly even of health; to be a first-class man is to have won a decisive success in the battle of life. In the little world to which our ambition has hitherto been confined, we have risen to the summit of all things; for tutors, professors, and other authorities are nothing but contemptible old fogies, hide-bound with useless pedantry. So imposing, indeed, is the position of the youth who has just won high honours, that I confess that I have never been able to meet as an equal those who attained that position when I was a freshman. Thackeray speaks of the old gentleman of seventy who still shuddered at the dream of being flogged by the terrible headmaster of his youth. In my imagination, the lads who held sway in the university when I first had the honour of a gown, and who, as we fondly believed, rivalled, in different departments, Porson and Sir Isaac Newton, and Pitt, and Coleridge, and Byron, are still surrounded by a glory exceeding that of any of the sons of men. But a cynical freshman would be an impossible creature.

Most men soon part with their university bloom: the world demolishes their splendid ideal, and even Oxford and Cambridge sink to be provincial towns with a large proportion of cultivated men and promising lads; but not enchanted palaces of virtue and learning. The senior wrangler himself walks down the Strand without attracting a crowd; and a

benighted metropolis has rather hazy notions of the precise meaning of triposes and littlegoes. Yet there are a happy few who carry about with them to later life the rose-coloured atmosphere which first gathered round them in the walks of Trinity or Christ Church, and retain the estimate then formed of the outer world of barbarians. These are the genuine prigs; and as live and let live is a very good, though very trite motto, I have no objection to their existence. They would not voluntarily hurt my feelings; and indeed the really irritating thing about them is their invariable condescension. They have the art of posing themselves like monumental statues on invisible pedestals which they carry about with them. They are sincerely anxious to put us at our ease. They smile benevolently at any little criticisms which we may hazard, as one smiles at the infantile prattle of children. They have a mission, of which they are perfectly conscious, and they move in a light not vouchsafed to the horny eyes of a cynic. But they feel deeply that their ineffable superiority does not entitle them to be harsh with us. They have even been known to approve of an occasional joke, though never condescending to make one themselves; they deal gently but firmly with us; and after we have amused ourselves with our playthings, bring us back to the discussion of a serious subject. If the conversation strays, for example, to some mere personal gossip, they take advantage of the first accidental loophole to ask our opinion of the merits of female suffrage, or the prospects of trades-unionism. On woman's rights they are especially strong—it may be from a natural sense of gratitude; for women, as natural haters of cynicisms and inclined to sentiment,

are generally far more tolerant of priggishness than men. Perhaps, too, there is something pleasant to the feminine imagination in the air of infallibility which these excellent beings affect; for they are apt to gather into cliques, and round private prophets, of whom to confess ignorance is to confess yourself one of the profane. This gives them that great advantage which belongs to the esoteric disciples of a narrow sect—the power of forming mutual admiration societies. A great, though unintentional, service has been done them by an eloquent writer, as far as possible removed from their weaknesses, in popularizing the nickname Philistine. Like other nicknames, that word has degenerated in common use, till it is sometimes a mere shibboleth, employed by the genuine prig to designate all who are not prigs. Not but that the two characters may be sometimes reconciled in that truly portentous variety of the prig who founds his claim to superiority on the exclusive possession of the true doctrine about the currency, or the checks and balances of the British constitution. But, as a rule, to do him justice, the prig chooses for his pet doctrine some less husky and indigestible fragment of truth.

To object to such persons in their youth would be morose; though even then the phase is not without its dangers. It implies a consciousness—which may frequently be well founded—of great powers, and a rather overweening estimate of their importance. It is useful, we may say, as the yolk which surrounds a bird before it has left the egg—on condition that it is thoroughly absorbed. When the day-dreams of the youth begin to turn into the settled delusion of the man, they first show their enervating influence.

To eradicate these delusions requires that treatment with some biting social acids which cynics are destined by nature to secrete. The youthful enthusiast who has not undergone some such hardening process suffers from a sort of fatty degeneration of the moral nature. He exhibits that insipid flabby sentimentalism which does more than anything to disgust reasonable men with philanthropy. It is, doubtless, a thousand pities that anyone should be disgusted with so essential a virtue: but how is it to be avoided? A man who is capable of deep emotion at the mass of misery which still stagnates in the world, who is anxious for stern and sharp remedies well considered and vigorously carried into execution, is thrust aside by the crowd of amiable quacks who are occupied in puffing themselves and their pet nostrums. The cliques—each of which possesses, in its own estimation, the one panacea for curing all our evils—form, as it were, a series of social hothouses, in which philanthropists are forced, like early peas, to an unhealthy precocity of growth. They shoot up into prize specimens, intensely admired by those who have carefully cultivated them, and manured them with compliment and applause, but of weak fibre and feeble constitution. If you venture to criticize one of these gushing and feminine creatures, you are accused of harshness, brutality, and indifference to the finer feelings of our nature. You are a coarse cynic, and probably a sceptic into the bargain; your impatience of schemes that won't work, and of feeble attempts to varnish decayed places instead of curing them, is considered to imply indifference to the end desired. It is easy to set down the contempt of practical men for half the charitable



schemes of the day to a grovelling selfishness. Much of it may be so; but it only needs a glance at the chaotic muddle of the London charities, to see the advantage that would result if people would look before they leap, and take a lesson or two from the scorners and sneerers. Doing good requires forethought as well as other things; and the fashionable denunciation of cynicism has tended to deprive us of the benefits of all criticism. People are so charmed with the romantic aspect of things that they won't look at the prosaic, commonplace aspect of the evils to be encountered. To say the truth, one is occasionally inclined to regret that martyrdom has gone out of fashion. Doubtless it was wrong to saw an apostle in two; but the practice had its advantages. It forced social reformers into a sterner temper, and a more thorough-going policy, and discouraged the crowd of thoughtless volunteers, who hinder the work they profess to help. The word, indeed, remains, but its whole signification is altered. Two of the most desirable events in life are, to be suppressed by Act of Parliament or to become a martyr. In one case, you are left with a good income and nothing to do; in the other, you are the object of universal sympathy, and may very probably receive even pecuniary compensation. When stakes and faggots were in vogue, there were objections to the honour; but now it would be hard to show a man a more delicate attention than to prosecute him for heresy, whether theological, political, or even scientific, for he is certain to become a "lion," and not improbably the pet of some enthusiastic clique.

As this moral tonic has gone out of use, the critic's sneer is, perhaps, the best substitute left. It may do

something to clear the atmosphere of cant, and to strip the prig of his inordinate affections. By itself it can, indeed, do nothing; but it gets rid of some of the constantly accumulating masses of humbug, and allows us at least to see things as they are. To the objection that it is cruel, the answer is that it can hardly hold the existing evils in check. The unfounded superstition that brutal critics of a former day slew Keats by their abuse has long been worn out, and is scarcely even quoted more than once a week or so. We may say, in Rosalind's words, "men have died, and worms have eaten them"—but not of criticism. Persons who talk of the ferocity of the most fabulous creature known as the slashing critic, must indulge in some very erroneous estimates of the amount of genius in this country. A hasty calculation may be easily made. Compare the number of novelists of established reputation with the swarms of aspirants, whose first efforts are criticized in nearly every paper we take up, and then compare the number of favourable and unfavourable judgments. A rule of three will result, which would prove either that we are now turning out rivals to Fielding, or Scott, or Thackeray with unprecedented rapidity, or that many respectable writers are being welcomed with an excess of compliment. It is only too easy to say which is the most probable alternative. Or we may compare the number of living authors of recognized ability, who struggled against critics in their youth—if any such can be named—with the number who have been hopelessly spoilt by undue praise. At every turn we find really clever novelists, poets, and artists who have made a hit on their first attempt, and have ever since been their own servile imitators.

It is of the rarest occurrence now to find one who has been exposed to the opposite and less searching trial of hostility, or even a want of recognition. Unless a man wilfully plunges into some abstruse branch of inquiry, some thorny byway of metaphysical or historical inquiry, he is in especially greater danger from the excess than the deficiency of sympathy. A patron, we know, in Dr. Johnson's time, was "one who looked with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he had reached ground, encumbered him with help." The public, we are told, has taken the place of patron and discharges it in very different fashion. It has innumerable critics placed, like the Humane Society's men on the Serpentine, with ample provision of hooks, ropes, and grapples. On the first appearance of a swimmer of any buoyancy, he is seized, hauled on shore, patted on the back, applauded, petted, treated to drinks, supplied with funds, and generally made into an idol with all the questionable advantages of such a position. If some poor critic comes by and says, "Really that young man is an impostor," he is hooted at as a cynic whose only motive must be an unworthy jealousy. And yet there are impostors—if we may imitate Galileo's profession of faith. Nay, so far is criticism from damaging genuine talent, that even an impostor, if endowed with sufficient impudence, can thrive and wax fat and sell innumerable editions in the teeth of his scorers. All that the critic can hope to do is to keep alive the belief that there is some distinction between good writing and bad, and to encourage public opinion occasionally to assert its independence. It is an encouraging fact that by incessantly hammering at the point, sensation

novelists have been forced to put forward a defence. Critics are totally unable to crush the faults of which they complain, but they can maintain a certain sensibility to blame. It is still known by tradition that there are some canons of good taste, which a man may indeed safely defy so far as his bookseller's account is concerned, but which will avenge themselves on his future fame. If the tradition does not quite expire, it is due to a few faithful critics—much reviled by the enthusiastic part of mankind—who go about smiting pretenders right and left; and, it may be, sometimes administering a random blow to someone who does not deserve it.

The enthusiasts, who think that revolutions are to be made with rosewater, that the world is to be awed by patting all the good boys on the head without administering the birch to the bad ones, may possibly object to this doctrine. It sounds plausible to say, praise the good and let the bad find its own path to decay. Yet even they will perhaps admit some force in the next claim which I venture to put forward. There are in this world certain persons known by the good old English name of fools. Although we shrink from applying the name to any individual, we know that, in the aggregate, they form a vast and almost impenetrable phalanx. Like other men, they have their uses; they serve, perhaps, as ballast, and prevent the machinery of the world from moving too fast. Certainly they do it effectually. There is something portentous about the huge masses of dogged stupidity which environ us on every side. There are noodles alive who repeat with infinite variations the oration composed for them by Sydney Smith, and repeat their little saws about the wisdom of our

ancestors, the contrast between theory and practice, and other profound considerations leading up to the grand conclusion, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*. It may be that some of the finest specimens of the tribe were those who lately engaged in the defence of the worst abuses in workhouses, and happily compared all who denounced them to persons with a morbid appetite for "putrid oysters." The force of the analogy may not be very obvious, but it had a certain currency at the time from the happy confusion of ideas which it indicated. Vestrymen, as this scrap of their eloquence implies, are frequently dull; and it may even be that their education gives them a dullness of a peculiarly fine flavour. But we cannot flatter ourselves that dullness is confined to Bumbledom, nor to its unfortunate subjects. There is, we may venture to imagine, some stupidity in high places; and if any doubts be entertained on the subject, we might ask Mr. Mill for his opinion of Conservative members of Parliament, or Mr. Bright for his views of bishops. Assuming that those eminent men cannot be speaking entirely without book, and noting, for our private edification, the singular resemblance between the two sides of the House of Commons, and the fact that lawn sleeves do not naturally change human nature, we may venture to hazard a conjecture that there is probably a good deal of stupidity up and down the country. How is it to be assaulted with any prospect of success? The thick armour which Providence has bestowed upon this class of mankind is proverbial. Take it for a rule, as the poet observes,

No creature smarts so little as a fool.

But if anything is to be done, he must be made to smart. Someone must do for him that kind office which had to be done for the mediæval knight who had been tumbled over in his impregnable suit of armour, and force open the rivets. Where is his vulnerable place? Preaching, however eloquent, passes over him like a distant and pleasant murmur. He plants himself more firmly in his seat, and refuses to budge. He is like a huge wrestler whom I have seen wearing down his active antagonist by sheer weight. If he moved, he was thrown in an instant; but so long as he stood stolidly stockstill no efforts were of the slightest use. We want someone to stir him up as the Spanish bull is excited by a firework or two planted in his neck. Now, fortunately, the very dullest of mortals is more or less accessible to contempt. He dislikes being written down an ass. He throws off his mantle of sevenfold indifference under a few judicious taunts, and brings his clumsy strength into the arena. It is curious to remark how, in a political contest, the loftiest eloquence loses its effect after a day or two; and some little epigram thrown out in the heat of the contest remains fizzing and sparkling unquenchably, in spite of all efforts to stamp it out, and keeps up the spirit of the weary combatants. Keen, scornful common sense, compressed into a few pungent words, piercing through the buncombe and the flummery, should be welcomed even by those it attacks. It is the signal that the parade of the fencer with blunted foils is over, and that real work with sharp steel is beginning.

But it may be urged this is, after all, a debasing view of things. Cynics who delight to pierce windbags and to unmask humbugs, are equally apt to

throw mud at heroes. Even if the hero laughs at them, the popular mind is prejudiced. If, in those old days of dragons and martyrs, there had been such things as newspaper reporters and weekly essayists, what kind of criticism would have greeted men who died in the discharge of the noblest of duties? Or suppose that even now some gallant missionary has been devoured in the Cannibal Islands, and that the court journalist of that country has managed to catch something of the European tone. "The news which has just come to us," he would perhaps say, "is certainly to be lamented. Cannibalism, as a custom, is undoubtedly doomed, though we may regret the sentimentality which has finally suppressed so picturesque and harmless a custom. Be that as it may, we have become too dainty to eat our enemies, though not too dainty to kill them; we have sacrificed to morbid prejudices a savoury and nutritious article of diet; and, of course, laws, however unsatisfactory in point of reason, must be obeyed. Even missionaries who land upon our shores must be protected. But we would ask them, if they still retain any gleams of common sense, what it is that they expect to gain? Mumbo Jumbo may not be in all respects a satisfactory object of worship; but what known doctrine is thoroughly satisfactory? His worshippers believe that if they knock each other on the head, or marry more than a dozen wives, or eat human flesh out of season, they will suffer for it; it is a rough creed containing, it may be, some errors; but, on the whole, it is excellently adapted to the state of civilization, and any more refined doctrines would simply fly over the people's heads. Mumbo Jumbo's priests are not men of any high

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polish, but they have a great influence over the vulgar, and save some expense in police arrangements. The man who upsets such a state of things, incurs a heavy responsibility, and ought to be perfectly clear that his teaching will be better adapted to the minds of his audience. If he is fool enough, for the sake of so doubtful a good, to run the risk of being made into chops, we are of course bound, as far as may be, to frustrate his excellent intention, and to prevent him from obtaining the object of his foolish wishes. So far as we can secure it by reasonable precautions, his friends shall not boast that he has been converted into meat, roast, boiled, or baked; but if we unluckily fail, they must also thoroughly understand that we hold him to be simply an idiot whose folly has met with its natural, if not its lawful reward."

In some such tone, I imagine, we should greet many martyrdoms nowadays: and I fully admit that it is only within narrow bounds, only when acting as a strictly subordinate check, that cynicism is desirable or pardonable. Mustard is a good thing, but we cannot dine off it; and there are, undoubtedly, limits to the use of vitriol. When chivalry is sneered away, there is a fearful loss to the people whose powers of reverence are injured; only at present I fear it is in equal danger of being stifled by injudicious praise, and lost from sight in a mass of Brummagem imitations. A little supply of cynicism should be kept on hand to test the genuine nature of the article. Let us only reflect, to use one obvious illustration, how much good would be done if in every church there came in at sermon-time the cynic who is so often denounced in his absence; if he was



accommodated with a seat, and allowed to put the clergyman a few questions afterwards in private: would not the logic to which we are treated be generally sounder, the eloquence more severe, and a little more care be shown not to shelter sheer nonsense under the respect due to sacred things? We should, I fancy, more frequently enjoy what, in spite of all that is said against sermons, is really one of the most elevating of all possible influences, the eloquence of a man who has put the whole powers of his mind to enforce doctrines of whose truth and vital importance he is even passionately convinced, and who further remembers that he is talking to men as well as to children.

SIR LESLIE STEPHEN—*The Cornhill Magazine.*

## QUIS DESIDERIO . . . ?

LIKE Mr. Wilkie Collins, I, too, have been asked to lay some of my literary experiences before the readers of the *Universal Review*. It occurred to me that the *Review* must be indeed universal before it could open its pages to one so obscure as myself; but, nothing daunted by the distinguished company among which I was for the first time asked to move, I resolved to do as I was told, and went to the British Museum to see what books I had written. Having refreshed my memory by a glance at the catalogue, I was about to try and diminish the large and ever-increasing circle of my non-readers when I became aware of a calamity that brought me to a standstill, and indeed bids fair, so far as I can see at present, to put an end to my literary existence altogether.

I should explain that I cannot write unless I have a sloping desk, and the reading-room of the British Museum, where alone I can compose freely, is unprovided with sloping desks. Like every other organism, if I cannot get exactly what I want I make shift with the next thing to it; true, there are no desks in the reading-room, but, as I once heard a visitor from the country say, "it contains a large number of very interesting works." I know it was not right, and hope the Museum authorities will not be severe upon me if any of them reads this confession; but I wanted a desk, and set myself to consider which of the many very interesting works which a grateful nation places

at the disposal of its would-be authors was best suited for my purpose.

For mere reading I suppose one book is pretty much as good as another; but the choice of a desk-book is a more serious matter. It must be neither too thick nor too thin; it must be large enough to make a substantial support; it must be strongly bound so as not to yield or give; it must not be too troublesome to carry backwards and forwards; and it must live on shelf C, D, or E, so that there need be no stooping or reaching too high. These are the conditions which a really good book must fulfil; simple, however, as they are, it is surprising how few volumes comply with them satisfactorily; moreover, being perhaps too sensitively conscientious, I allowed another consideration to influence me, and was sincerely anxious not to take a book which would be in constant use for reference by readers, more especially as, if I did this, I might find myself disturbed by the officials.

For weeks I made experiments upon sundry poetical and philosophical works, whose names I have forgotten, but could not succeed in finding my ideal desk, until at length, more by luck than cunning, I happened to light upon Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians*, which I had no sooner tried than I discovered it to be the very perfection and *ne plus ultra* of everything that a book should be. It lived in Case No. 2008, and I accordingly took at once to sitting in Row B, where for the last dozen years or so I have sat ever since.

The first thing I have done whenever I went to the Museum has been to take down Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians* and carry it to my seat. It is not the custom of modern writers to refer to the works

to which they are most deeply indebted, and I have never, that I remember, mentioned it by name before; but it is to this book alone that I have looked for support during many years of literary labour, and it is round this to me invaluable volume that all my own have page by page grown up. There is none in the Museum to which I have been under anything like such constant obligation, none which I can so ill spare, and none which I would choose so readily if I were allowed to select one single volume and keep it for my own.

On finding myself asked for a contribution to the *Universal Review*, I went, as I have explained, to the Museum and presently repaired to bookcase No. 2008 to get my favourite volume. Alas! it was in the room no longer. It was not in use, for its place was filled up already; besides, no one ever used it but myself. Whether the ghost of the late Mr. Frost has been so eminently unchristian as to interfere, or whether the authorities have removed the book in ignorance of the steady demand which there has been for it on the part of at least one reader, are points I cannot determine. All I know is that the book is gone, and I feel as Wordsworth is generally supposed to have felt when he became aware that Lucy was in her grave, and exclaimed so emphatically that this would make a considerable difference to him, or words to that effect.

Now I think of it, Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians* was very like Lucy. The one resided at Dovedale in Derbyshire, the other in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury. I admit that I do not see the resemblance here at this moment, but if I try to develop my perception I shall doubtless ere long find

a marvellously striking one. In other respects, however, than mere local habitat the likeness is obvious. Lucy was not particularly attractive either inside or out—no more was Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians*; there were few to praise her, and of those few, still fewer could bring themselves to like her; indeed, Wordsworth himself seems to have been the only person who thought much about her one way or the other. In like manner, I believe I was the only reader who thought much one way or the other about Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians*, but this in itself was one of the attractions of the book; and as for the grief we respectively felt and feel, I believe my own to be as deep as Wordsworth's, if not more so.

I said above, "as Wordsworth is generally supposed to have felt"; for anyone imbued with the spirit of modern science will read Wordsworth's poem with different eyes from those of a mere literary critic. He will note that Wordsworth is most careful not to explain the nature of the difference which the death of Lucy will occasion to him. He tells us that there will be a difference; but there the matter ends. The superficial reader takes it that he was very sorry she was dead; it is, of course, possible that he may have actually been so, but he has not said this. On the contrary, he has hinted plainly that she was ugly, and generally disliked; she was only a violet when she was half-hidden from the view, and only fair as a star when there were so few stars out that it was practically impossible to make an invidious comparison. If there were as many as even two stars the likeness was felt to be at an end. If Wordsworth had imprudently promised to marry this young person during a time when he had been unusually long in keeping to good

resolutions, and had afterwards seen someone whom he liked better, then Lucy's death would undoubtedly have made a considerable difference to him, and this is all that he has ever said that it would do. What right have we to put glosses upon the masterly reticence of a poet, and credit him with feelings possibly the very reverse of those he actually entertained?

Sometimes, indeed, I have been inclined to think that a mystery is being hinted at more dark than any critic has suspected. I do not happen to possess a copy of the poem, but the writer, if I am not mistaken, says that "few could know when Lucy ceased to be." "Ceased to be" is a suspiciously euphemistic expression, and the words "few could know" are not applicable to the ordinary peaceful death of a domestic servant such as Lucy appears to have been. No matter how obscure the deceased, any number of people commonly can know the day and hour of his or her demise, whereas in this case we are expressly told it would be impossible for them to do so. Wordsworth was nothing if not accurate, and would not have said that few could know, but that few actually did know, unless he was aware of circumstances that precluded all but those implicated in the crime of her death from knowing the precise moment of its occurrence. If Lucy was the kind of person not obscurely portrayed in the poem; if Wordsworth had murdered her, either by cutting her throat or smothering her, in concert, perhaps, with his friends Southey and Coleridge; and if he had thus found himself released from an engagement which had become irksome to him, or possibly from the threat of an action for breach of promise, then there is not a syllable in the

poem with which he crowns his crime that is not alive with meaning. On any other supposition to the general reader it is unintelligible.

We cannot be too guarded in the interpretations we put upon the words of great poets. Take the young lady who never loved the dear gazelle—and I don't believe she did; we are apt to think that Moore intended us to see in this creation of his fancy a sweet, amiable, but most unfortunate young woman, whereas all he has told us about her points to an exactly opposite conclusion. In reality, he wished us to see a young lady who had been a habitual complainer from her earliest childhood; whose plants had always died as soon as she bought them, while those belonging to her neighbours flourished. The inference is obvious, nor can we reasonably doubt that Moore intended us to draw it; if her plants were the very first to fade away, she was evidently the very first to neglect or otherwise maltreat them. She did not give them enough water, or left the door of her fern-case open when she was cooking her dinner at the gas stove, or kept them too near the paraffin oil, or other like folly; and as for her temper, see what the gazelles did; as long as they did not know her "well," they could just manage to exist, but when they got to understand her real character, one after another felt that death was the only course open to it, and accordingly died rather than live with such a mistress. True, the young lady herself said the gazelles loved her; but disagreeable people are apt to think themselves amiable, and in view of the course invariably taken by the gazelles themselves anyone accustomed to weigh evidence will hold that she was probably mistaken.

I must, however, return to Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians*. I will leave none of the ambiguity about my words in which Moore and Wordsworth seem to have delighted. I am very sorry the book is gone, and know not where to turn for its successor. Till I have found a substitute I can write no more, and I do not know how to find even a tolerable one. I should try a volume of Migne's *Complete Course of Patrology*, but I do not like books in more than one volume, for the volumes vary in thickness, and one never can remember which one took; the four volumes, however, of Bede in Giles' *Anglican Fathers* are not open to this objection, and I have reserved them for favourable consideration. Mather's *Magnalia* might do, but the binding does not please me; Cureton's *Corpus Ignatianum* might also do if it were not too thin. I do not like taking Norton's *Genuineness of the Gospels*, as it is just possible someone may be wanting to know whether the Gospels are genuine or not, and be unable to find out because I have got Mr. Norton's book. Baxter's *Church History of England*, Lingard's *Anglo-Saxon Church*, and Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, though none of them as good as Frost, are works of considerable merit; but on the whole I think Arvine's *Cyclopedia of Moral and Religious Anecdote* is perhaps the one book in the room which comes within measurable distance of Frost. I should probably try this book first, but it has a fatal objection in its too seductive title. "I am not curious," as Miss Lottie Venne says in one of her parts, "but I like to know," and I might be tempted to pervert the book from its natural uses and open it, so as to find out what kind of a thing a moral and religious anecdote is. I know, of course, that there



are a great many anecdotes in the Bible, but no one thinks of calling them either moral or religious, though some of them certainly seem as if they might fairly find a place in Mr. Arvine's work. There are some things, however, which it is better not to know, and take it all round, I do not think I should be wise in putting myself in the way of temptation, and adopting Arvine as the successor to my beloved and lamented Frost.

Some successor I must find, or I must give up writing altogether, and this I should be sorry to do. I have only as yet written about a third, or from that—counting works written but not published—to a half of the books which I have set myself to write. It would not so much matter if old age was not staring me in the face. Dr. Parr said it was "a beastly shame for an old man not to have laid down a good cellar of port in his youth"; I, like the greater number, I suppose, of those who write books at all, write in order that I may have something to read in my old age when I can write no longer. I know what I shall like better than anyone can tell me, and write accordingly; if my career is nipped in the bud, as seems only too likely, I really do not know where else I can turn for present agreeable occupation, nor yet how to make suitable provision for my later years. Other writers can, of course, make excellent provision for their own old ages, but they cannot do so for mine, any more than I should succeed if I were to try to cater for theirs. It is one of those cases in which no man can make agreement for his brother.

I have no heart for continuing this article, and if I had, I have nothing of interest to say. No one's literary career can have been smoother or more un-

chequered than mine. I have published all my books at my own expense, and paid for them in due course. What can be conceivably more unromantic? For some years I had a little literary grievance against the authorities of the British Museum because they would insist on saying in their catalogue that I had published three sermons on Infidelity in the year 1820. I thought I had not, and got them out to see. They were rather funny, but they were not mine. Now, however, this grievance has been removed. I had another little quarrel with them because they would describe me as "of St. John's College, Cambridge," an establishment for which I have the most profound veneration, but with which I have not had the honour to be connected for some quarter of a century. At last they said they would change this description if I would only tell them what I was, for, though they had done their best to find out, they had themselves failed. I replied with modest pride that I was a Bachelor of Arts. I keep all my other letters inside my name, not outside. They mused and said it was unfortunate that I was not a Master of Arts. Could I not get myself made a Master? I said I understood that a Mastership was an article the University could not do under about five pounds, and that I was not disposed to go sixpence higher than three ten. They again said it was a pity, for it would be very inconvenient to them if I did not keep to something between a bishop and a poet. I might be anything I liked in reason, provided I showed proper respect for the alphabet; but they had got me between "Samuel Butler, bishop," and "Samuel Butler, poet." It would be very troublesome to shift me, and bachelor came before bishop. This was reasonable, so I replied that,

under those circumstances, if they pleased, I thought I would like to be a philosophical writer. They embraced the solution, and, no matter what I write now, I must remain a philosophical writer as long as I live, for the alphabet will hardly be altered in my time, and I must be something between "Bis" and "Poe." If I could get a volume of my excellent namesake's *Hudibras* out of the list of my works, I should be robbed of my last shred of literary grievance, so I say nothing about this, but keep it secret lest some worse thing should happen to me. Besides, I have a great respect for my namesake, and always say that if *Erewhon* had been a racehorse it would have been got by *Hudibras* out of *Analogy*. Someone said this to me many years ago, and I felt so much flattered that I have been repeating the remark as my own ever since.

But how small are these grievances as compared with those endured without a murmur by hundreds of writers far more deserving than myself. When I see the scores and hundreds of workers in the reading-room who have done so much more than I have, but whose work is absolutely fruitless to themselves, and when I think of the prompt recognition obtained by my own work, I ask myself what I have done to be thus rewarded. On the other hand, the feeling that I have succeeded far beyond my deserts hitherto, makes it all the harder for me to acquiesce without complaint in the extinction of a career which I honestly believe to be a promising one; and once more I repeat that, unless the Museum authorities give me back my Frost, or put a locked clasp on Arvine, my career must be extinguished. Give me back Frost, and, if life and health are spared, I will write another

dozen of volumes yet before I hang up my fiddle—if so serious a confusion of metaphors may be pardoned. I know from long experience how kind and considerate both the late and present superintendents of the reading-room were and are, but I doubt how far either of them would be disposed to help me on this occasion; continue, however, to rob me of my Frost, and, whatever else I may do, I will write no more books.

*Note by Dr. Garnett, British Museum.*—The frost has broken up. Mr. Butler is restored to literature. Mr. Mudie may make himself easy. England will still boast a humorist; and the late Mr. Darwin (to whose posthumous machinations the removal of the book was owing) will continue to be confounded.—R. GARNETT.

SAMUEL BUTLER—*Essays.*

## A DEFENCE OF DETECTIVE STORIES

IN attempting to reach the genuine psychological reason for the popularity of detective stories, it is necessary to rid ourselves of many mere phrases. It is not true, for example, that the populace prefer bad literature to good, and accept detective stories because they are bad literature. The mere absence of artistic subtlety does not make a book popular. Bradshaw's *Railway Guide* contains few gleams of psychological comedy, yet it is not read aloud unroariously on winter evenings. If detective stories are read with more exuberance than railway guides, it is certainly because they are more artistic. Many good books have fortunately been popular; many bad books, still more fortunately, have been unpopular. A good detective story would probably be even more popular than a bad one. The trouble in this matter is that many people do not realize that there is such a thing as a good detective story; it is to them like speaking of a good devil. To write a story about a burglary is, in their eyes, a sort of spiritual manner of committing it. To persons of somewhat weak sensibility this is natural enough; it must be confessed that many detective stories are as full of sensational crime as one of Shakespeare's plays.

There is, however, between a good detective story and a bad detective story as much, or, rather more, difference than there is between a good epic and a bad one. Not only is a detective story a perfectly

legitimate form of art, but it has certain definite and real advantages as an agent of the public weal.

The first essential value of the detective story lies in this, that it is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life. Men lived among mighty mountains and eternal forests for ages before they realized that they were poetical; it may reasonably be inferred that some of our descendants may see the chimney-pots as rich a purple as the mountain-peaks, and find the lamp-posts as old and natural as the trees. Of this realization of a great city itself as something wild and obvious the detective story is certainly the *Iliad*. No one can have failed to notice that in these stories the hero or the investigator crosses London with something of the loneliness and liberty of a prince in a tale of elfland, that in the course of that incalculable journey the casual omnibus assumes the primal colours of a fairy ship. The lights of the city begin to glow like innumerable goblin eyes, since they are the guardians of some secret, however crude, which the writer knows and the reader does not. Every twist of the road is like a finger pointing to it; every fantastic skyline of chimney-pots seems wildly and derisively signalling the meaning of the mystery.

This realization of the poetry of London is not a small thing. A city is, properly speaking, more poetic even than a countryside, for while nature is a chaos of unconscious forces, a city is a chaos of conscious ones. The crest of the flower or the pattern of the lichen may or may not be significant symbols. But there is no stone in the street and no brick in the wall that is not actually a deliberate symbol—a

message from some man, as much as if it were a telegram or a post card. The narrowest street possesses, in every crook and twist of its intention, the soul of the man who built it, perhaps long in his grave. Every brick has as human a hieroglyph as if it were a graven brick of Babylon; every slate on the roof is as educational a document as if it were a slate covered with addition and subtraction sums. Anything which tends, even under the fantastic form of the minutiae of Sherlock Holmes, to assert this romance of detail in civilization, to emphasize this unfathomably human character in flints and tiles, is a good thing. It is good that the average man should fall into the habit of looking imaginatively at ten men in the street even if it is only on the chance that the eleventh might be a notorious thief. We may dream, perhaps, that it might be possible to have another and higher romance of London, that men's souls have stranger adventures than their bodies, and that it would be harder and more exciting to hunt their virtues than to hunt their crimes. But since our great authors (with the admirable exception of Stevenson) decline to write of that thrilling mood and moment when the eyes of the great city, like the eyes of a cat, begin to flame in the dark, we must give fair credit to the popular literature which, amid a babble of pedantry and preciousness, declines to regard the present as prosaic or the common as commonplace. Popular art in all ages has been interested in contemporary manners and costume; it dressed the groups around the Crucifixion in the garb of Florentine gentlefolk or Flemish burghers. In the last century it was the custom for distinguished actors to present Macbeth in a powdered wig and ruffles.

How far we are ourselves in this age from such conviction of the poetry of our own life and manners may easily be conceived by anyone who chooses to imagine a picture of Alfred the Great toasting the cakes dressed in tourist's knickerbockers, or a performance of *Hamlet* in which the prince appeared in a frock-coat with a crape band round his hat. But this instinct of the age to look back, like Lot's wife, could not go on for ever. A rude, popular literature of the romantic possibilities of the modern city was bound to arise. It has arisen in the popular detective stories, as rough and refreshing as the ballads of Robin Hood.

There is, however, another good work that is done by detective stories. While it is the constant tendency of the Old Adam to rebel against so universal and automatic a thing as civilization, to preach departure and rebellion, the romance of police activity keeps in some sense before the mind the fact that civilization itself is the most sensational of departures and the most romantic of rebellions. By dealing with the unsleeping sentinels who guard the outposts of society, it tends to remind us that we live in an armed camp, making war with a chaotic world, and that the criminals, the children of chaos, are nothing but the traitors within our gates. When the detective in a police romance stands alone, and somewhat fatuously fearless amid the knives and fists of a thieves' kitchen, it does certainly serve to make us remember that it is the agent of social justice who is the original and poetic figure, while the burglars and footpads are merely placid old cosmic conservatives, happy in the immemorial respectability of apes and wolves. The romance of the police force is thus the whole



romance of man. It is based on the fact that morality is the most dark and daring of conspiracies. It reminds us that the whole noiseless and unnoticeable police management by which we are ruled and protected is only a successful knight-errantry.

G. K. CHESTERTON—*The Defendant.*

## WALKER MILES

WHEN Macaulay's New Zealander has finished his meditations on London Bridge, and comes to sum up the history of this country, he will, if he is a wise man, have something to say on the subject of names. In Book VII, Chapter IV, Section 48 on Individualism, he will point out how we always tried to ascribe events to single individuals, and to stamp them with a great name; how we worshipped our national heroes when they were dead, and ascribed all our glories to them; how we hung their statues with garlands on appointed days, or wore flowers which were somebody else's favourites. But he will add that this tendency did not stop there: that a great many things which were really public and national institutions, having originated in individual effort, remained to the end marked with the individual name. Bradshaw, Whitaker, Crockford, Hazell, Haydn, Kelly—in another country we should have had long official and descriptive titles, but in England all these great works—the very props of our domestic life—still bear the names of their creators, though these have in some cases passed from us. We cling passionately, with something of an anthropomorphic instinct, to the idea of a single man in each case, of one colossal brain issuing annually or at intervals in these magnificent aggregations of an indispensable fact.

In this list there is a name lacking, and it is one

which, far more truly than the rest, stands for unaided effort and individual enterprise. I mean Walker Miles, the author of *Field Path Rambles* and other guide-books for walking in the home counties. Less wide in his scope than Whitaker, less exuberant in detail than Bradshaw, he yet stands, in virtue of his subject, on a far higher plane than either. Bradshaw can lay before us, with masterly lucidity and conciseness and a wealth of symbolic resource, a picture of our country's passenger transport system; Whitaker articulates for us the whole skeleton of its official being. But our country is something more than a complex of railways or a structure of offices and salaries; and the true Englishman, or at least the true Londoner, when he has expended a proper veneration on the other masters of actuality, should at any rate have a thought to spare for Walker Miles.

Walker Miles was not, it may be inferred, his real name. There are colleagues of his, co-heirs of his renown, who deal with other parts of the country: and one of them bears the name of Alf Holliday. Both names were clearly pleasantries, adopted possibly from modesty, possibly from a feeling that their task was too sacred to be associated with the name of an actual man. But it is as Walker Miles that we know him: as Walker Miles he influences our lives, guides our steps, and points us to the inner secrets of our native land. And, among his colleagues, he was clearly the leader and the pioneer. Alf Holliday and Noah Weston have great moments: Hertfordshire is theirs and the Northern Heights are theirs: theirs are Chipperfield Common and St. Albans and the Valley of the Chess. But Walker Miles has Kent and the whole of Surrey; the Oxted Hills and the Epsom

Downs, and that wonderful triangle whose apices are Guildford and Leatherhead and Leith Hill; all these, to his eternal honour, are marked with his name.

The task which he undertook may be indicated by the words with which he himself begins his immortal work on the Surrey Hills. "It has been remarked, and with much truth, that to anyone with a good knowledge of our field paths and bridle roads, England may be said to be one vast open space for the enjoyment and recreation of its people. This knowledge, however, is somewhat difficult of attainment, owing mainly to the frequent absence of any distinctive mark or indication by which a public right-of-way may be known. Even the ordnance maps afford no assistance in this direction." It was to the spreading of this "good knowledge" that he addressed himself. With consummate care and precision, he set himself to select from the vast complex of footpaths the best and most interesting, to weave them into continuous walks bearing a practical relation to the facilities for railway travel and food supply, and then, by instructions which even the most careless could hardly mistake, to lay them open to his followers. We can picture him with his notebook and compass, piecing together the stray and apparently purposeless fragments of path which abound in our country, harking back, altering, revising, adding touches of detail for the guidance of the inexperienced, suppressing all superfluity, sparing no pains in his effort to spread the good knowledge, to reveal the vast open space for enjoyment and recreation, and, in a very real sense, to restore England to the English.

It was a work necessarily incomplete and necessarily open to criticism. An exhaustive treatment of the footpaths of any district, however concise and summary, would run into quartos: it was the essence of Walker Miles's books that they must be small and portable. The most, therefore, that he could hope to do was to adumbrate certain main routes and to leave others to work out in detail all the countless variations and combinations. And since every man has his own predilections in footpaths as much as in poetry, Walker Miles labours under all the limitations and all the vulnerability of the anthologist. There is no one of us but could pick out here and there points in which the Walker Miles route could (as we think) be improved upon; there are few who do not habitually abandon his guidance at times and take a favourite line of their own. But such variations neither undo his work nor disestablish his primacy among home-county walkers: it was only through following his way that we were able to improve upon it; and we may be sure that he himself would never have wished the good knowledge to be limited within the necessarily narrow confines of his own work, but would rather have welcomed any subsequent variations which amplified without superseding it.

Perhaps one general criticism of his work may be allowed which rests on something more than a personal predilection. He seems hardly to have realized the fascination of the straight line. Of course he had to cater for all types—the six-miler, the twelve-miler, the eighteen-miler, and the twenty-four-miler—the four great classes of walkers which are separated by more than a numerical distinction; and

stations and inns had to be provided at suitable points to meet all these tastes. Even so, the routes seem often unnecessarily tortuous; and although the tortuosities are never objectless, and often lead to exceptionally fascinating pieces of scenery, yet there is lacking that grandeur of conception about the walk as a whole, that sense of a sustained purpose, which attaches to a straight-line walk of twenty miles or more. There is a certain sublimity, such as the Roman roadmakers must have felt, in holding a general direction across country regardless of the rise and fall of the ground: most of all when the direction is southward, and the sun swings slowly round from the left cheek to the nose and on to the right cheek and the right ear. So man goes straight to his goal while the constellations swing round him. Still, if we wish to improve on Walker Miles in this way, the remedy is in our own hands; and more, we shall often find that some of the greatest moments of our line are his. Of the two big lines in the central Surrey district, that from Epsom to Guildford (it is not quite straight) is made up of three Walker Miles fragments (Epsom—Burford Bridge—Ranmore—Guildford); while that from Esher to Leith Hill, perhaps the greatest of all, reaches its climax in Walker Miles's track through the Rookeries and up the Tillingbourne Valley, or the even nobler route through Deerleap Wood and Wotton.

The mention of straight lines suggests one of the most difficult of walking questions, namely the functions and limitations of trespassing. There is a definite type of walker who loves trespassing for its own sake, and exults, as he climbs a fence or turns up a path marked "Private," in a vision of the

landed aristocracy of England defied and impotent. There is much excuse for this attitude: as we review the history of English commons and rights-of-way, of the organized piracy upon the body politic and the organized perjury which supported it, it is difficult to stifle an impulse to throw at least one little pebble on our own account, if only for old sake's sake, at the forehead of Goliath. But like other unregenerate impulses, this carries its punishment with it. To indulge the love of trespassing involves ultimately making trespassing an end rather than a means, and this—like the twin passion for short-cuts as ends in themselves—is disastrous to walking. It may rest on a mere natural love for law-breaking: it may—and often does—rest on higher and deeply considered motives; but in either case it is an alien element in the commonwealth of walking.

Trespassing on high moral grounds has the further disadvantage that it leads to meticulous hair-splitting. I know walkers who think it right to trespass on the grounds of a large landowner, but not on those of a small landowner. They consequently draw a line at five acres or so, and have to consider, whenever trespassing is proposed, on which side of the line the field of action lies. Under conditions of urgency—the only conditions which unquestionably justify trespassing—there is little time for such refinements of casuistry, and as a matter of fact moral considerations usually go by the board in any real crisis. I have myself seen one of the most fervent upholders of the five-acre doctrine open the gate of a blameless householder at Caterham, walk down his ten-foot garden path, climb his back-fence, and so issue on to a private golf-links.

There are practical disadvantages, too, in the way of the hardened trespasser. Sooner or later, at the end of his trespassing, waits Nemesis for him—the keeper, flanked by dogs and fortified by a gun, purple-faced in hate of a wrong not his, ingeminating the awkward question, “Did you see the notice-boards or did you not?” And there follows the mean and abject retreat to the nearest road, with the vision of the landed aristocracy calm and triumphant.

And there are deeper reasons which make trespassing for its own sake a passion unworthy of a walker. The desire to affront the landed aristocracy is just one of those disconnected and abstract impulses which walking should mould and settle into the structure of larger thought. He who walks over English country in a proper and receptive frame of mind must catch something of its spirit, of the age-long order of possession. It is not only the voice of the keeper and landowner that is lifted against the casual trespasser: it is the voice of a long tradition, a settled convention, the voice in a sense, of the country itself. The force which settled the forms of wood and field and hedgerow, which fixed the very conditions of our walking, is the same force which (dimly comprehended) pulsates in the breast of the indignant keeper and hardens the faces of the “Private” notice-boards against us. In the concrete imagination of the practised walker such a force must have its due place; and, beside it, the vague and abstract love of trespassing is but a shadowy phantom of to-day.

But if we can respect the rights of others, we can also respect our own; and it is here that Walker Miles is at once our prophet and our guide. As ancient as



the fields themselves, as securely based upon the ages and sanctified by the use of our fathers, the footpaths and field-tracks stand as the living embodiment of popular rights. Beside the way which the feet of generations have worn to church or inn, the loftiest dwellings and widest parks are mere parvenus. If the trespasser wishes to commit an act of symbolic defiance against the landed aristocracy, he need not climb their fences or jump through their flower-beds: he can tread the right-of-way which existed before they were thought of, which conditioned the laying out of their estates, which often cuts clean through their property with all the contempt of an oak for a mushroom. Some rights-of-way may have been lost to us, in the manner mentioned above; but many yet remain which the Romans trod; and all the forces of darkness have not prevailed against them.

The preservation of commons and footpaths has now passed into the hands of a great and beneficent society; Pompeius has set sail on the Mediterranean, and the pirates have been subdued. But there is no surer guard for our rights than a steady and regular patrolling of our possessions; and in this Walker Miles is a safe guide. He is a master of all the tricks by which the public is at present cheated, all the last desperate devices of defeated piracy. The locked gate of the farmyard, the "Trespassers" board planted by the stile within a foot of the path, the track which appears to lead up to the doors of a private house—all these figure in his stately prelude, and are exemplified again and again in the course of his works. Following in his steps we need fear no keeper: and if ever a bar or board stand in our way we can disregard it. Beside one of the Oxted paths there lie (or

lay) the shattered remains of a notice-board which some usurper had planted in the very centre of the way. I can claim no credit for its destruction, for by the time I came there was in truth very little destroying left to be done; but I like to think of that unknown devotee of Walker Miles, pursuing his placid way, faced suddenly by the intruder, and with one splendid motion laying it low and (as far as could be judged) jumping on it afterwards.

The style of Walker Miles is perhaps an acquired taste. He wrote under peculiar conditions: he had to be at once clear and compendious, that the careless walker might not miss his way nor the weakling stagger under the weight of a large volume. He had thus little use for rhetorical tropes and flourishes; his words had to be cut down to the bare minimum necessary to express his meaning. But, to the initiated, this rigorous conciseness lends his style a peculiar value: every word has its appointed function: we feel that we could not sacrifice a single line; nay, those who have unintentionally done so by skipping a few lines in the middle of a page have regretted it when the subsequent directions became unintelligible. And the fact—also necessitated by his conditions—that most of the verbs are in the imperative mood exercises a singular charm; we feel that the author is in an intimate relation with us, addressing us personally and not merely discoursing from afar.

As a sample of his style, I take a section of the walk from Leith Hill to Felday.

“ Another lane is soon reached. Cross this lane, and take the opposite path uphill towards the

entrance-gate of the approach-road to Highashes farm. Pass through this gateway, and upon reaching the first outhouse, note a wicket gate on the left. Pass through it and follow the track downhill between banks. Upon coming out upon an open path through the wood, still keep straight ahead along the hillside, with a copse overhead on the right, and a grand larch-wood below on the left. In another quarter-of-a-mile the SEVENTEENTH MILE point will be reached, and then for half-a-mile further the path still continues easily up and down the picturesque undulations of the wood."

Within the compass of six sentences we have traversed perhaps the most wonderful mile in all the author's works. The uninformed may regard the passage as dull, but to those who know their Walker Miles, and above all to those who know the Highashes farm bridle-path, there is more meaning in these simple words than in all the laboured enthusiasms of a guide-book or a local-colour novelist. In the whole passage there are but two descriptive epithets, and these are of the most temperate kind: but both their rarity and their temperance give to the epithets of Walker Miles a special value: he only uses them when there is something which deserves epithet. As the short and businesslike sentences pass before us in ordered succession, we may fairly recall another author who knew how to gain vividness by sacrificing ornament; we catch again something of the quick, uplifting stringendo of Thucydides.

Works of reference are traditionally the butts for small wit; and it is possible that as Walker Miles becomes more widely known a legend will spring up

that his directions are obscure, like the sister legend, fostered by dying or dead humorists, that Bradshaw is unintelligible. The Bradshaw myth has by now got some footing, and it will take a few generations of increasing good sense to kill it; but it may be hoped that all walkers will combine to strangle any embryo Walker Miles legend at birth. If a man knows the four points of the compass, can distinguish between his right hand and his left, and (occasionally) can recognize a holly or an oak, he has all the equipment necessary for understanding Walker Miles. I have followed his directions now for some years, and have only come to grief from my own carelessness, or from actual changes in the country which have made his directions out of date. Now and then the course of a footpath has been altered: for example, the High-ashes Farm track now debouches not into the Felday road, but into the cross-road to Abinger, so that one turns to the left instead of the right. Here and there, too, a stile has been removed or a gate has become a gap. But the great bulk of Walker Miles is still accurate, and none but a fool need go astray.

Under which term I include, with the deepest respect, betrothed couples: in the honourable and Shakespearean sense they are fools, being too much occupied with supramundane things to be able to attend properly to the business in hand. It was my good fortune one Whit-Monday to overtake two such couples on a Walker Miles track, both with the Master's work in hand and both somewhat puzzled as to its meaning; but I was able to set both right by precept and example, and I trust that there are now two happy homes where Walker Miles stands in the place of honour in the front-parlour, ousting *East*

*Lynne* and the other customary household gods. There is also a story about a minister of state, but that has nothing to do with Walker Miles.

Useful, accurate, concise, intelligible—it is no light thing to be able to predicate these qualities without reservation of a man's work: and I doubt if he himself would have desired further praise. There is no trace of trumpet-blowing in his writings: indeed, he leaves the reader in doubt whether he himself realized the full measure of his achievements. "Though the main roads to Leith Hill," he says, "are perhaps some of the most charming in the country, it is, nevertheless, strange how few except thorough-going rambles know of any other routes. The five following rambles will, therefore, it is to be hoped, find favour with those who like to get off the 'beaten track.' They are all different, both going and returning, and are of varying lengths, as will be seen by reference to page 65." In this masterpiece of understatement it is difficult to know whether a smile of Socratic irony is not lurking on the master's lips, waiting the answering smile of the disciple who understands. Where another would have let loose the big trumpet of the "*Exegi monumentum*" timbre, he merely states the fact. "They are all different, both going and returning."

He himself has gone to return no more, and only his works remain. But I like to think that somewhere on the Elysian plain, where prophet and hero and poet tread together down the well-worn paths, a single figure quests somewhat aside, writing words of gold upon an ivory tablet as he goes. "Continuing on past the Happy Groves take the well-marked track to the right, but at the third clump of asphodel, note a

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grassy track diverging to the left, and follow this until it leads into an open space covered with amaranth and moly."

HUGH SIDGWICK—*Walking Essays*.

## ON EXPRESSION

EXPRESSION is my subject; and no mariner embarking on the endless waters of the Atlantic in a Canadian canoe could feel more lost than the speaker who ventures on a theme so wide and inexhaustible. And yet—how pleasant to know that it doesn't matter how one steers; for in no case can one arrive! The barque of discourse must needs be lifted every which way, veer helplessly in the winds and cross-currents of the measureless, and trace a crazy line.

Let me hazard, however, a prefatory axiom, about expression as a whole: The soul of good expression is an unexpectedness which, still, keeps to the mark of meaning, and does not betray truth. Fresh angles, new lights; but neither at the expense of significance, nor to the detriment of verity; never, in fact, just for the sake of being unexpected.

Following first the incorrigible bent of a novelist, let me proffer a speculation or two on the connexion between expression and character-drawing. Hardly any figures in prose fiction seem to survive the rust of Time unless burnished by happy extravagance, saved by a tinge of irony, or inhabited by what one may call "familiar spirit." The creations of such writers as Rabelais, Cervantes, Dumas, and Dickens may serve to illustrate survival through happy extravagance; of Fielding, Jane Austen, Thackeray, and Anatole France through ironical tincture; of Tolstoy through "familiar spirit."

We all understand happy extravagance, however incapable of it we may be; nor do we find any great difficulty in appreciating the preservative qualities of an ironic humour, which is very much a part of English character. I need not, then, dwell on expression in regard to these. "Familiar spirit" is a more mysterious affair. The characters in fictions who are inhabited by "familiar spirit" are such as convince the reader that he might meet and recognize them walking the every-day world. Mr. Hardy's "Tess," Mr. Moore's "Esther," Mr. Bennett's "Elsie" in *Riceyman Steps*, and Mr. Wells's "Kipps" are good English specimens of characters so endowed. But one may gather more easily from Tolstoy's creations in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénina*, than from any English examples, the nature of this quality. It demands an unself-consciousness rare in English and French novelists—perfectly simple expression, without trick, manner, or suspicion or desire to seem clever, modern, æsthetic. Tolstoy was lost, indeed, in the creative mood when he made "Natasha," "Pierre," and "Anna."

"Familiar spirit," however, may inhabit a whole book and ensure its permanence, although that book contains no characters who remain in the mind: *Cranford*, *The Golden Age*, *The Purple Land* occur to me as instances. And probably the perfect example of "familiar spirit" permeating both book and its characters is Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*—that joyous work as sure of immortality as any book I know. While on the question of resistance to Time, we ought, I suppose, to be wondering how much longer bulk is going to count in the equation of survival. Life driven by inventions from pillar to post



has ever less time in its bank for us to draw on. But the persistent popularity of *Don Quixote*, *Tom Jones*, *David Copperfield*, *War and Peace*, and other very long masterpieces seems to contradict the logical suspicion that economy of expression must favour durability. The contemporary novel, at all events, shows little sign of shrinkage. Expression seems rather to be taking the bit between its teeth, and galloping on the road. Ours is an experimental epoch. New doctrines obtain. It has become, for instance, something of a fashion to feel that under the fevering influence of emotional stress we are all alike. Hero—they say—differs little from hero, when both are in pursuit of heroines. Villains have much in common, and are readily nosed in the lobby. Passion, in sum, is a leveller. Hence, the novelist's itch to express character without rise or fall in blood pressure—to bring out the individuality of the hero by subtle pictures of him changing his socks or putting in his clutch; or the heroine, by refining on her as she applies her lip-stick, pours in her bath-salts, or leans out of the window into the summer night.

This undramatic mode has its drawbacks, and, so far perhaps, only two writers, neither of whom ever wrote a novel, have succeeded in using it to perfection—the Russian Tchegov and the English Katherine Mansfield. Their stories have a real pastmastership of everyday moments, of significant insignificances, and of differentiation through little in-between events. But by both of them this in-between method of expression was instinctively, I think, rather than self-consciously, adopted. It may be doubted whether they knew quite what they were aiming at—though

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certain words in Katherine Mansfield's diary show that she was approaching that knowledge when she passed from the world she loved and studied.

Among the experimentalists in expression, we cannot avoid noting, also, the psycho-analyst with his, or generally her, love of the worm in the bud, and prepossession with the past; an industrious and interesting method presided over by conscience in azure stockings and a handkerchief slightly scented with iodoform. These and other experimentalists have no doubt made an arrangement with Time to pass them through the Customs. But will they all escape confiscation? I quote a couple of paragraphs chosen at random from the work of a transatlantic writer, because a rising—nay, a risen—compatriot has termed her the most important pioneer in the field of letters in his time:

“When she was quite a young one she knew she had been in a family living and that that family living was one that any one could be one not have been having if they were to be one being one not thinking about being one having been having family living.”

And this:

“All there is of more chances is in a book, all there is of any more chances is in a list, all there is of chances is in an address, all there is is what is the best place not to remain sitting, and suggesting that there is no title for relieving rising.”

All modern writing, we are told by her compatriot, has sprung from experiments like these. Let me, however, read you a sentence written within twelve

months by a writer, not ancient, who veils himself under the initials "Y.Y.":

"Hence I shall do my best to go on thinking well of hermit crabs. They are toys—grotesques that might be fitted into a fairy's thimble—as they traffic hither and thither with their borrowed houses on their backs, while the spotted jelly-fishes float above them in their long draperies and indolence."

Dare I profess to you my preference for this, and my doubt whether, modern though it be, it has any relation to those lauded experiments?

These samples, by the way, illustrate conveniently my opening axiom that the soul of good expression is an unexpectedness which still keeps to the mark of meaning, and does not betray truth. "In their long draperies and indolence"—of jelly-fish, how unexpected, and yet how true! But what of unexpectedness lies in those other quotations comes, it would seem, from a sedulous desire to be unexpected and futuristic at all costs.

This cult of the Future in art and letters! Futuristic! The very word is self-conscious. It suggests exhaustion of interest, and folk who won't be happy till they get the moon, and when they do are still more miserable. The true discoverer is of his own day absorbed in what he is doing. He stumbles upon novelty; and his nose is not turned up. But in the effort to free English from the tiresome habit of being contemporary, experiment in expression can step backwards instead of attempting to skip. In an age of newspapers, advertisements, captions, and political speeches, revolt against everyday expression is natural. With so much froth on the lips of contemporary style,

young Hopeful suffers from reaction and walks, bowing, backwards. I have in mind a recent instance—an ingenious and polished piece of work wrought in the English of an old master. A sort of pleasant false step that can be taken once with great effect, but cannot be repeated. For, however agreeable by way of a change may be the ring of older English, and however natural the surfeit in young critics of modern work, the fact remains that all great writers have made their names by expressing themselves in the diction, not of the past, but of their own day. Like the black footmen in the burlesque “Polly,” we are all condemned to sing: “No retreat, no retreat; they must conquer or die who have no retreat.” A little crossing with older English styles may do our modern English no harm, but the best writing of our time keeps itself supple and free from imitations, and endeavours, without mannerism, to express in words that ring new the writer’s own temperament and vision. The great styles of the past cannot in the nature of things have a living unexpectedness for us of the present.

In sum, the less we try to form our English by self-conscious and definite experiments, keep our minds set towards the fresh, clear, supple expression of our visions, thoughts, and feelings, the greater the chance our English has of being fine. I make an exception, however, in favour of Income Tax forms and Acts of Parliament. A little self-conscious experiment on the part of their framers might at least enable us to understand them. Let me read you, at random, from a certain Lunacy Act:

“If, in the case of a lunatic being in a workhouse,

the medical officer thereof does not sign such certificate as in sub-section 1, of this section mentioned, or if at or before the expiration of fourteen days from the date of the certificate an order is not made under the hand of a Justice for the detention of the lunatic in the workhouse, or if after such an order has been made the lunatic ceases to be a proper person to be detained in a workhouse, the medical officer of the workhouse shall forthwith give notice in writing to a relieving officer of the Union to which the workhouse belongs that a pauper in the workhouse is a lunatic and a proper person to be sent to an asylum, and thereupon the like proceedings shall be taken by the relieving officer and all other persons for the purpose of removing the lunatic to an asylum, and within the same time, as by this Act provided in the case of a pauper deemed to be a lunatic and a proper person to be sent to an asylum, and pending such proceedings the lunatic may be detained in the workhouse."

Through long and painful study I can assure you that this really has a meaning; but is it any wonder that our asylums are full?

That breathless example of expression, by the way, dates from 1890, and I suggest that we can reasonably trace to it certain stopless modern experiments. Mark the rich crescendo of tumult towards the end, and the long periods for which one must sit with head in hands before glimmer of meaning will enter into it.

In short, expression, whether of laws, psychology, episode, or feeling, should be humane, and refrain from torturing the wits of mankind.

## ON EXPRESSION

From Acts of Parliament it seems natural to turn to Shakespeare. Has Shakespeare inspired or discouraged the writer of English? His genius exhausted, as it were, the possibilities of expression. He even gave us our slang. When we say of a bore "Fire him out!" we do but follow Shakespeare. And that takes me off at a tangent. The incorporation of slang words—local, professional, even "family" slang words—into the language is, in reason, no bad thing. Slang is, at least, vigorous and apt. Probably most of our vital words were once slang; one by one timidly made sacrosanct in despite of ecclesiastical and other wraths. For the beauty of a slang word is that you need not put it in the dictionary, it cries its own meaning to its own muffin-bell.

The mention of slang bends the mind almost insensibly towards the great American language; for some, as you know, have claimed that the Americans already have a language of their own. Let us avoid hyperbole. If Americans, with some exceptions, speak American, they still write English, and generally very good English. Compare the dialogue, for instance, in Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*, with the prose that lies in between; or listen to a play by Eugene O'Neill, and then peruse the polished periods of the late President Wilson. Certain Americanisms, too, are but Anglicisms which time has murdered for us. Take for example the expression "His first book *in* three years," where we should say "His first book *for* three years." "I determined not to play again *in* three months" may be met with in the early Jacobean diary of Lady Anne Clifford. Other "Americanisms" are English dialect words almost lost over here; the very common Americanism "dinky" will fall from

the lips of a Dartmoor farmer, than whom no one knows less of America.

We English have quite as much divergence between our spoken and our written language, with this difference perhaps: Americans who talk in jargon often write good English; but Britons who speak the wondrous treble called cockney, and the blurred ground-bass of the Yorkshire and Lancashire towns, rarely express themselves at all in written words. And yet dare we condemn cockney—a lingo whose waters, in Southern England, seem fast flooding in over the dykes of the so-called Oxford accent, and such other rural dialects as are left?

And this brings me to a rather serious point: There is perhaps no greater divider of society than the difference in *viva voce* expression. If the East End on Hampstead Heath of a Bank Holiday pronounced its aitches, and said "Bai Jove! Isn't it ráther naice?"—or if, on the other hand, the West End dropped its aitches, and said "Aow! Look at the caows in the tryne!" should we not be very near to a social millennium? And this seems to invite the further question: Which of these two forms of English, cockney twang or the drawl of culchah, is the more desirable as a national form of speech? The spirit of the age seems to favour cockney; and, certainly, it is glibber on the tongue. Place the offspring of culchad ducks under a cockney-speaking hen, and the ducklings will take to cockney as steel flies to a magnet. Cockney is infectious because it follows the line of least resistance, requiring far less effort of lips and tongue. Against cockney, then, with such adventitious advantages, the appeal must lie to the ear. To which of these two forms of speech is it pleasanter,

or—shall we say—less maddening, to listen? If an unprejudiced Zulu were dropped into two circles of chatterers, the one in coster-town, the other in—well, not Oxford, for Oxford is maligned—what would be the poor fellow's verdict? Who shall say?

At the present rate of cockney progress it will, however, not be long before your presidential address opens like this:

“A meriner navigytin' the endless waters of the gry Etlentic in a Canydian canoe could feel no more lorst than the speaker venturin' on a stunt laike this. An' yet aow pleasant to know that it daon't metter aow yer steer, for in no kyse can yer arrive.”

If this is not desirable, our educational authorities will have to take in hand, even more seriously than at present, the subjugation of cockney in our national schools. And yet, would it be better if your milkman's boy said every morning: “Heah you are! A quart of milk, half a pound of buttah, and a bushel of eggs? That raight? Really! I'm frightfully bucked. Good-bay!”

Perhaps some day our educational authorities may make both these forms of linguistic disease notifiable, and isolate the sufferers.

In the course of this digression I have mentioned the ear; and you will perhaps forgive me if I side-slip abruptly to the relative importance of ear and mind in lyric expression.

Take Shakespeare's “Out, out, brief candle!” Why is it charmed? Because of the vowel sounds? Or the dramatic unexpectedness of “brief” applied to “candle”? Or the image of the human spirit burning like a little flame, and blown into nothingness?



Because of all three, I think, and in about equal proportions.

Or take Shelley's:

"Mary dear, come to me soon,  
I am not well whilst thou art far;  
As sunset to the spheréd moon,  
As twilight to the western star,  
Thou, beloved, art to me."

Again the vowel sounds; the unexpectedness of the word "far"; the imagery: to these must be added the emotion of longing. Wise, by the way, is a lyric poet when his appeal is short. Even Shelley would have been accounted far greater if he had left behind him only a picked tenth of his work. Lyric expression, in fact, can never afford to outrun its own strangeness. The following sonnet of Masfield's seems to me a fine expression of strange beauty:

"Go spend your penny, Beauty, when you will,  
In the grave's darkness let the stamp be lost.  
The water still will bubble from the hill,  
And April quick the meadows with her ghost;  
Over the grass the daffodils will shiver,  
The primroses with their pale beauty abound,  
The blackbird be a lover, and make quiver  
With his glad singing the great soul of the ground;  
So that if the body rot, it will not matter;  
Up in the earth the great game will go on,  
The coming of Spring and the running of the water,  
And the young things glad of the womb's darkness  
gone.

And the joy we felt will be a part of the glory  
In the lover's kiss that makes the old couple's story."

Though the last two lines exemplify—to me at least—

that sudden emotional failure which blurs so much lyrical expression, even of the best poets.

The name Masfield brings up that form of expression known as the narrative poem. How far can verse do justice to a tale? The *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Canterbury Tales* were free from the rivalry of prose, for the prose narrative did not then apparently exist. The narrative poem to-day is a hybrid—like opera, that offspring of an unhappy marriage, for drama demands swiftness, music requires luxurious leisure; and a rich, long-drawn insistence at the top of the voice on emotions essentially sudden is characteristic of their child opera. Still, some mongrels are enchanting; who can resist the seduction of *Orfeo*, of *Carmen*, of *Pagliacci*? Opera “comes off” now and again, so does the narrative poem. It is, no doubt, a question of proportion. Just as water is  $H_2O$ , not  $H_3O$ —unless, indeed, it has changed in these impatient times—so a narrative poem must be just rightly balanced between the lyrical and the merely narrational. If there be too little percentage of lyrical beauty, we ask ourselves why, for the telling of a tale, verse, with its metrical handicap, was chosen, when free prose was to hand. Yet none of us would have *The Ancient Mariner*—that almost perfect narrative poem—expressed in prose: it is unthinkable.

“The moving Moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide;  
Softly she was going up,  
And a star or two beside——”

Unneighbourly people—poets! Using metres so perfectly that no one can use them again! An injunction

should surely have been obtained to restrain George Meredith from writing *Love in the Valley*.

“When her mother tends her before the laughing  
mirror,  
Tying up her laces, looping up her curls——”

he jumped the claim of that metre in perpetuity. We owe grudges, too, against Fitzgerald for *Omar Khayyám* and Housman for *The Shropshire Lad*; and we never know when the next appropriation will be made. This is why poets have nervy temperaments, and more careful men go into the Law.

And while on the subject of lyrical expression it would seem fitting to consider what is known as journalese. Many journalists, of course, never stain their pages with that peculiar lyricism. And yet no event, I suppose, of dramatic moment occurs without the Press somewhere inflating the word-currency. The symptoms of journalese are the free use of clichés, and of artificial stimulation, through over-expression, gross or slight. It loves to say “largely,” and that dreadful preposition “as regards,” it dotes on any word with “cata” in it—catastrophe, cataclysm; battens on national fevers, and plays no small part in keeping a country’s temperature above normal. It is highly infectious, and has been known to attack statesmen and other dignitaries. When journalese was at its rifest the Ministry of Health was established—possibly a coincidence.

But all over-expression, whether by journalists, poets, novelists, or clergymen, is bad for the language, bad for the mind; and by over-expression I mean the use of words running beyond the sincere feeling of writer or speaker or beyond what the event will

sanely carry. From time to time a crusade is preached against it from the text: "The cat was on the mat." Some Victorian scribe, we must suppose, once wrote: "Stretching herself with feline grace, and emitting those sounds immemorially connected with satisfaction, Grimalkin lay on a rug whose richly variegated pattern spoke eloquently of the Orient and all the wonders of the Arabian Nights." And an exasperated reader annotated the margin with that shorter version of the absorbing event. How the late Georgian scribe will express the occurrence we do not yet know. Thus, perhaps: "What there is of cat is cat is what of cat there lying cat is what on what of mat lying cat." The reader will probably annotate the margin with "Some cat!"

But beside the verbose and florid runs another form of journalistic over-expression—the snappy head-line, which has attained as yet greater perfection in the glad atmosphere of America:

"Girl of thirteen, denied fine garb, tries death leap."

"Navy Board Holds Oil Quiz."

"Jokes on me says Angel of Film Star."

"Old man Stork a busy bird in Ruhr district."

"Acquitted murderer is through with girls."

"John T. King Highball hits Town."

Behind such galopading England still trails with leaden foot, hoping each year to overtake. "Hot-spurs beat Blackburns" may yet become "Hots belt Blacks"; "Crippen hanged", "Ole man Crippen treads ether"; "Lord Palmerston unwell," "Pam punctured."

And is this perhaps the fitting moment to say a word about expression at Westminster? Eloquence,

impromptu or prepared, is a gift, which fills one, who lacks it, with a sort of reverence. And yet there is no denying that rhetoric is glib of tongue and knows not suspense. While rigmarole—like a man in a fog—goes round and round in a circle. Experience, listening, and reading suggests that the hypodermic syringe alone could put a period to rigmarole in a certain house. All a man has to say on a given subject can be said—they tell us—in twenty minutes. That is why I am taking an hour!—The dictum, in other words, is an exaggeration. Still, the biographies of statesmen abound in praises of superb orations; but when you read them you are often bored to tears by their prolixity, and wonder where those biographers could have been “raised.” Chatham, Burke, Fox, Grattan, Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli—there is not one who did not constantly over-express himself and weaken the pith of his persuasion. Making every allowance, for the customs of a House where Bills can still, it seems, be talked out, and members are obliged to speak lest other members should speak in place of them, there is still a rich margin of need for that considered brevity which, if not the soul of wit, is at least an aid to good and vigorous English, and a guarantee against sleep.

Having said so much about over-expression, you will expect me perhaps to touch on its antithesis. We English, for all our habit of dropping into poetry, are supposed to be an inexpressive race. There is some evidence. Consider, for instance, the Englishman speaking after dinner. He hums and haas, his eyes stare vacantly, he twiddles his buttons, and then, just as you are getting nervous that he is going to break down, you become conscious of a steady stream

of sound; you are relieved, you lean back; you say "Hear, hear!" and the stream flows on, neither rising nor falling, just flowing, flowing; and slowly, slowly, you become nervous again—you look at your watch—oughtn't-er-oughtn't it to stop? But it-er-doesn't. Every five minutes you rouse yourself and murmur "Ha-ha!" And the stream flows on. You give it up, you sleep, and suddenly you hear: "But, ladies and gentlemen, I must not take up any more of your time." You rap the table, you seize your glass. But—lo!—he's off again! You apostrophize the Deity in French; you yawn. He sees you, but it only seems to quicken the stream. And then, all at once, it stops. It has dried up, he is sitting down. And what has he said? What *has* he said? It has been a perfect example of under-expression.

But give an Englishman something to *do* in which he believes—for who can believe in speaking after dinner?—and he will do it with a minimum of talk; he will give you, in fact, another perfect example of verbal failure. Some few years ago painters coined the word "expressionism." When asked what they meant by it, they became involved and hot. Only fools—they thought—could mistake their meaning. Amazing number of fools in those days! At last a great good painter made it clear. Expressionism meant expressing the inside of a phenomenon without depicting its outside in a way that could be recognized. That is to say, if you wanted to express an apple-tree you drew and coloured one vertical and three fairly horizontal lines, attached a small coloured circle to one of these, and wrote the word "Fruity" in the catalogue. To express an Englishman by the expressionistic method you drew what resembled a

pump, coloured it in a subdued manner, and wrote the words "Not working properly" in the catalogue.

I have not said anything, so far, about dramatic expression. The subject is delicate. When seeing a play, I am curiously absorbed in the dialogue—the interest, emotions, and suspense aroused by it. However birds may sing, streams flow, and thunders roll, on the stage; however luridly, austerely, symbolically, classically, or realistically the scene be architected, I am seeking the human figure and the words of his mouth—the "Out, out, brief candle!" And this is unfortunate, because dramatic expression through mere words seems to be going out of fashion. Cinema, revue, ballet, puppet show, and the architectural designer—all are in conspiracy to lower its importance. When enjoying a film, a ballet, a book by Mr. Gordon Craig I become uneasy. What if words are doomed—merely to be used to fill in the interstices of architecture, the intervals between jazz music, or just written on a board! What if the dramatist is to become second fiddler, a hack hired and commissioned! Shakespeare remarked: "The play's the thing!" We echo the saying, feel virtuous, and take our tickets for "The Three-Cornered Hat," "Lilac Time," "Charlie Chaplin," and "The Follies"; or, bemoaning the absence of British drama, sit down to wait for a National Theatre.

Do not, I beg, misunderstand me! Dialogue can be intolerable. Out of whole plays by noted dramatists half the words could be blotted with advantage. Many fourth acts would be better returned to the limbo of their authors' brains. And many characters have perished by their creators' theoretical loquacity! I stand by the definition I once gave, so rashly, for

it has been accusing me of failure ever since: "Good dialogue is character. . . . The art of writing true dramatic dialogue is an austere art, denying itself all licence, grudging every sentence devoted to the mere machinery of the play, suppressing all jokes and epigrams severed from character, relying for fun and pathos on the fun and tears of life. From start to finish, good dialogue is hand-made, like good lace; clear, of fine texture, furthering with each thread the harmony and strength of a design to which all must be subordinated."

It is curiously symptomatic of our variegated epoch that alongside the movement against dialogue plays are now and then written more full of polished and subtle conversation than ever plays have been. Such plays, however, though very interesting to read, hardly come under the heading of dramatic expression; they belong rather to a new form of psychological literature, intended, if not intentionally, for the study.

After all, there is no end to the extension of form—to the moulds into which we may run this language of ours, the greatest medium of expression in the world to-day. Including its American variety, the English language is the word-coin of well-nigh one hundred and seventy million white people, spread over nearly half the land surface of the earth. It is the language of practically every sea; the official tongue of some three hundred and fifty million brown and black and yellow people; the accredited business medium of the world; and more and more taught in South America, Japan, and some European countries. It would appear, indeed, to have a certain start of the artificial languages, Esperanto, Volapuk, and Ido, in



the race for the honour of becoming the second language used in every country.

Now, the peace of the world and the march of true civilization are intimately wrapped up with the exchange of international thought and the establishment of a single intercommunicating speech common to the educated in all countries. In days when hardly any orator succeeds in reseating himself without mentioning the peace of the world, I am waiting for a word in favour of that peace-promoter, the adoption in common of a second language. When educated expression in all countries finds the means of direct linguistic communication, the Cinderella, Peace, may have, at last, some chance of appearing at the ball.

The most beneficent task which the League of Nations could perform would be the conjuring of an arrangement to this end from the peoples of the earth. The ideal course is an adoption by agreement of a single second language to be taught in all countries. And I regret profoundly that there seems little likelihood of any such consummation.

The establishment of a second language, so far as present indications point, appears to rest rather upon the drift of accidental—or shall we say of natural?—causes, as an unconscious matter of practical expediency and by way of the line of least resistance. And any impartial scrutiny must at this moment of time place English at the head of all languages as the most likely to become, in a natural unforced way, the single intercommunicating tongue. There is a tide in the affairs of language as in the affairs of men. The Napoleonic wars left French the predominant medium of mental exchange. French is still perhaps the lead-

ing speech in Europe. But French will never now spread effectively by natural means beyond Europe and North Africa. The decline of Europe, the expansion of the British Empire, the magnetism and ever-increasing power of America, are making English the real world-language. Its tide was never before so high. This is a solemn thought for us who believe in our mother tongue and all it stands for—our hopes, our learning, our customs, our history, and our dreams.

For us private English folk who directly or indirectly are concerned with the welfare of the English language, there seems to be the duty of never losing sight of its world destiny. Surely we are not entitled to the slippered, unbraced word-garb of stay-at-homes; we need the attire of language braced and brushed, and fit to meet all glances. For our language is on view as never language was.

I often wonder, if only I didn't know English, what I should think of the sound of it, well talked. I believe I should esteem it a soft speech very pleasant to the ear, varied but unemphatic, singularly free from guttural or metallic sounds, restful, dignified, and friendly. I believe—how prejudiced one is!—that I would choose it, well spoken, before any language in the world, not indeed as the most beautiful, but as the medium of expression of which one would tire last. Blend though it be, hybrid between two main stocks, and tintured by many a visiting word, it has acquired rich harmony of its own, a vigorous individuality. It is worthy of any destiny, however wide.

The mind, taking a bird's-eye view of the English language from Chaucer to this day, noting the gradual but amazing changes it has undergone, will find it impossible, I think, to give the palm to any particular

period in all those centuries. As with the lover of flowers who, through the moving seasons of the year, walks in his garden, watching the tulip and the apple blossom, the lilac, the iris, and the rose bloom in their good time, and cannot tell which most delights his eyes, nor when his garden reaches its full sweetness, so it is with us who love good English. Chaucer, Shakespeare, the makers of the Authorized Version, Defoe, Swift, Addison, Johnson, Burke, or Bright, you cannot crown the English of any one of these and say "Here the pinnacle was definitely reached." They were masters of expression, they used supremely well the English language of their days, tuning the instrument for their contemporaries, enlarging it for those who came after them. But the possibilities of this great organ of expression transcend even Shakespeare or the Bible. Dare we say that English is past its prime? Shall we accept defeat, and write the word decadent across the page? We cannot judge as yet the English of our day: we see the trees delicate or rank, leafy or dead in its bewildering wood, but the wood itself we cannot see. Every generation, and especially every English generation, is tempted to depreciate itself. This habit, however amiable and wholesome, is insincere, for there is in nearly all of us that which secretly stands by the age we live in.

I, at least, like to regard the English language as still in the making, capable of new twists and bold captures; and yet I think our attitude towards it should have more reverence; that we should love our mother tongue as we love our country, and try to express ourselves with vigour, dignity, and grace.

And so I end this wandering discourse with an affirmation of belief in the vitality, variety, the supple

strength and subtle tones of our rich and ancient language; and of a hope that we may come to use it, man for man, woman for woman, speaking and writing, throughout our island, better than it has ever yet been used, with a fuller sense of its music and expressive power.

JOHN GALSWORTHY—*Castles in Spain.*

## ON HUMOUR AND SATIRE

WHOEVER shall turn up in a modern encyclopædia the article on humming-birds—whether from a disinterested curiosity about these brightly coloured creatures, or from the more commonplace motive of identifying a clue in a crossword—will find a curious surprise awaiting him at the end of it. He will find that the succeeding paragraph deals with the geological formation known as *humus*; or if his encyclopædia be somewhat more exhaustive, with the quaintly named genius of Humperdinck. What will excite his speculation is, of course, the fact that no attempt is made by his author to deal with humour. Humour, for the encyclopædist, is non-existent; and that means that no book has ever been written on the subject of humour; else the ingenious Caledonian who retails culture to us at the rate of five guineas a column would inevitably have boiled it down for us ere this. The great history of Humour in three columns, dedicated by permission to the Bishop of Much Wenlock, still remains to be written. And that fact, in its turn, is doubly significant. It means, in the first place, that humour, in our sense of the word, is a relatively modern phenomenon; the idea of submitting it to exhaustive analysis did not, for example, present itself to the patient genius of John Stuart Mill. And at the same time it is an uncommonly awkward and elusive subject to tackle, or

why have we no up-to-date guide to it from the hand of Mr. Arnold Bennett?

Assuredly this neglect is not due to any want of intrinsic importance. For humour, frowned upon it as you will, is nothing less than a fresh window of the soul. Through that window we see, not indeed a different world, but the familiar world of our experience distorted as if by the magic of some tricky sprite. It is a plate-glass window, which turns all our earnest, toiling fellow-mortals into figures of fun. If a man awoke to it of a sudden, it would be an enlightenment of his vision no less real than if a man who had hitherto seen life only in black and grey should be suddenly gifted with the experience of colour. More, even, than this; the sense of humour is a man's inseparable playmate; allowing him, for better or worse, no solitude anywhere. In crowded railway-carriages, in the lonely watches of a sleepless night, even in the dentist's chair, the sense of humour is at your side, full of elfin suggestions. Do you go to Church? He will patter up the aisle alongside of you, never more at home, never more alert, than when the spacious silences of worship and the solemn purple of prelates enjoins reverence. I could become lyrical, if I had time, over the sense of humour, what it does for men and how it undoes them, what comfort lies in its companionship, and what menace. Enough to say that if I had the writing of an encyclopædia the humming-birds should be made to look foolish.

Humour has been treated, perhaps, twice in literature; once in the preface to Meredith's *Egoist*, and once in Mr. Chesterton's book, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*. What it is still remains a mystery.

Easy enough to distinguish it from its neighbours in the scale of values: with wit, for example, it has nothing to do. For wit is first and last a matter of expression. Latin, of all languages, is the best vehicle of wit, the worst of humour. You cannot think a witty thought, even, without thinking in words. But humour can be wordless; there are thoughts that lie too deep for laughter itself. In this essay I mean to treat humour as it compares with and contrasts with satire, a more delicate distinction. But first let us make an attempt, Aristotle-wise, to pin down the thing itself with some random stab of definition. Let us say that the sphere of humour is, predominantly, Man and his activities, considered in circumstances so incongruous, so unexpectedly incongruous, as to detract from their human dignity. Thus, the prime source of humour is a madman or a drunkard; either of these wears the semblance of a man without enjoying the full use of that rational faculty which is man's definition. A foreigner, too, is always funny: he dresses, but does not dress right; makes sounds, but not the right sounds. A man falling down on a frosty day is funny, because he has unexpectedly abandoned that upright walk which is man's glory as a biped. All these things are funny, of course, only from a certain angle; not, for example, from the angle of ninety degrees, which is described by the man who falls down. But amusement is habitually derived from such situations; and in each case it is a human victim that is demanded for the sacrifice. It is possible, in the mythological manner, to substitute an animal victim, but only if the animal be falsely invested with the attributes of humanity. There is nothing at all funny about a horse falling down. A

monkey making faces, a cat at play, amuse us only because we feign to ourselves that the brute is rational; to that fiction we are accustomed from childhood. Only Man has dignity; only man, therefore, can be funny. Whether there could have been humour even in human fortunes but for the Fall of Adam is a problem which might profitably have been discussed by St. Thomas in his *Summa Theologiae*, but was omitted for lack of space.

The question is raised (as the same author would say) whether humour is in its origins indecent. And at first sight it would appear yes. For the philosopher says that the ludicrous is a division of the disgraceful. And the gods in Homer laugh at the predicament of Ares and Aphrodite in the recital of the bard Demodocus. But on second thoughts it is to be reflected that the song of Demodocus is, by common consent of the critics, a late interpolation in Homer; and the first mention of laughter in the classics is rather the occasion on which the gods laughed to see the lame Hephaestus panting as he limped up and down the hall. Once more, a lame man is funny because he enjoys, like the rest of us, powers of locomotion, but employs them wrong. His gait is incongruous—not unexpectedly so, indeed, for the gods had witnessed this farce daily for centuries; but the gods were children and the simplest farces always have the best run. No doubt the psycho-analysts will want us to believe that all humour has its origin in indecency, and, for aught I know, that whenever we laugh we are unconsciously thinking of something obscene. But, in fact, the obscene, as its name implies, is an illegitimate effect of humour. There is nothing incongruous in the *existence* of sex and



the other animal functions; the incongruity lies merely in the fact of mentioning them. It is not human dignity that is infringed in such cases, but a human convention of secrecy. The Stock Exchange joke, like most operations on the Stock Exchange, is essentially artificial; it does not touch the real values of things at all. In all the generalizations which follow it must be understood that the humour of indecency is being left out of account.

Yet there is truth in the philosopher's assertion that the ludicrous is a division of the disgraceful, in this sense, that in the long run every joke makes a fool of somebody; it must have, as I say, a human victim. This fact is obscured by the frequency with which jokes, especially modern jokes, are directed against their own authors. The man who makes faces to amuse a child is, objectively, making a fool of himself; and that whole *genre* of literary humour of which *Happy Thoughts*, the *Diary of a Nobody*, and the Eliza books are the best-known examples, depends entirely on the fact that the author is making a fool of himself. In all humour there is loss of dignity somewhere, virtue has gone out of somebody. For there is no inherent humour in things; wherever there is a joke it is Man, the half-angel, the half-beast, who is somehow at the bottom of it. I am insisting upon this point because, on a careless analysis, one might be disposed to imagine that the essence of satire is to be a joke directed against somebody. That definition, clearly, will be inadequate, if our present analysis of humour in general be accepted.

I have said that humour is, for the most part, a modern phenomenon. It would involve a very long

argument, and some very far-reaching considerations, if we attempted to prove this thesis of humour as a fact in life. Let us be more modest, and be content for the present to say that the humorous in literature is for the most part a modern phenomenon. Let us go back to our starting-point, and imagine one pursuing his researches about humming-birds into the *Encyclopædia Britannica* of 1797. He skims through a long article on Mr. David Hume, faced by an attractive but wholly unreliable portrait of the hippopotamus. Under "Humming-bird" he will only read the words "See Trochilus." But immediately following, he will find the greater part of a column under the title "Humour." Most of it deals with the jargon of a psychology now obsolete, and perhaps fanciful, though not more fanciful, I think, than the psychological jargon of our own day. But at the end he will find some valuable words on humour as it is contrasted with wit. "Wit expresses something that is more designed, concerted, regular, and artificial; humour, something that is more wild, loose, extravagant, and fantastical; something which comes upon a man by fits, which he can neither command nor restrain, and which is not perfectly consistent with true politeness. Humour, it has been said, is often more diverting than wit; yet a man of wit is as much above a man of humour, as a gentleman is above a buffoon; a buffoon, however, will often divert more than a gentleman. The Duke of Buckingham, however, makes humour to be all in all," and so on. "Not perfectly consistent with true politeness"—oh, admirable faith of the eighteenth century, even in its decline! "The Duke of Buckingham, however"—a significant exception. It seems

possible that the reign of the Merry Monarch saw a false dawn of the sense of humour. If so, it was smothered for a full century afterwards by an overpowering incubus of whiggery. The French Revolution had come and gone, and yet humour was for the age of Burke "not perfectly consistent with true politeness."

One is tempted, as I say, to maintain that the passing of the eighteenth century is an era in human history altogether, since with the nineteenth century humour, as an attitude towards life, begins. The tone of Disraeli about politics, the tone of Richard Hurrell Froude about all the external part of religion, seems to me quite inconceivable in any earlier age. But let us confine ourselves to literature, and say that humour as a force *in literature* is struggling towards its birth in Jane Austen, and hardly achieves its full stature till Calverley. I know that there are obvious exceptions. There is humour in Aristophanes and in Petronius; there is humour in Shakespeare, though not as much of it as one would expect; humour in Sterne, too, and in Sheridan. But if you set out to mention the great names of antiquity which are naturally connected with humorous writing, you will find that they are all the names of satirists. Aristophanes in great part, Lucian, Juvenal, Martial, Blessed Thomas More, Cervantes, Rabelais, Butler, Molière, La Fontaine, Swift—humour and satire are, before the nineteenth century, almost interchangeable terms. Humour in art had begun in the eighteenth century, but it had begun with Hogarth! Put a volume by Barrie or Milne into the hands of Edmund Burke—could he have begun to understand it?

You can corroborate the fact of this growth in humour by a complementary fact about our modern age, the decline of *naïveté*. If you come to think of it, the best laughs you will get out of the old classics are laughs which the author never meant to put there. Of all the ancients, none can be so amusing as Herodotus, but none, surely, had less sense of humour. It is a rare grace, like all the *gratiae gratis datae*, this humour of the *naïf*. Yet it reaches its climax on the very threshold of the nineteenth century; next to Herodotus, surely, comes James Boswell. Since the dawn of nineteenth century humour, you will find unconscious humour only in bad writers, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and the rest. Humour kills the *naïf*, nor could any great writer of to-day recapture, if he would, Boswell's splendid unconsciousness.

Under correction, then, I am maintaining that literature before the nineteenth century has no conscious humour apart from satire. I must now pass on to an impression which all of us have, but an impression so presumptuous that we seldom have the courage to put it into words. It is this, that humour, apart from satire, belongs to the English-speaking peoples alone. I say, the English-speaking peoples, a cumbrous and an unreal division of mankind. But, thank God, you cannot bring any preposterous ethnographical fictions in here. Not even Houston Stewart Chamberlain ever ventured to congratulate the Germans on their sense of humour; not even the Dean of St. Paul's will dare to tell us that the sense of humour is Nordic. The facts speak for themselves. Satire still flourishes on the Continent; Anatole France was no unworthy citizen of the

country of Voltaire. There is satire, too, among the Northern peoples; I believe that if I expressed my private opinion as to who was the world's greatest satirist I should reply, Hans Andersen. Only in spots, of course; but the man who wrote the *Ugly Duckling* and the *Darning Needle* and the *Story of the Emperor's New Clothes* seems to me to have a finer sense of the intrinsic ludicrousness of mankind than Swift himself. Satire is international, as it is of all ages; but where shall humour be found, apart from satire, on the Continent of Europe? Who, unless he were a laughter at the malicious or the obscene, ever picked up the translation of a foreign book in search of a good laugh? Who ever found a good joke in a Continental illustrated paper? Cleverness of drawing abounds, but the captions beneath the drawings are infantile. I have seen a Swedish illustrated supplement, and I do not believe there was a single item in it which would have been accepted by *Comic Cuts*. I am told that the humorous drama of modern France forms a complete exception to this statement of the facts. I am content to believe it; there must, of course, be exceptions. I put forward the rule as a rule.

Some, no doubt, on a hasty analysis, would limit the field still further by saying that humour is purely English. And it would be easy to defend this contention by pointing to the fact that the English enjoy their joke very largely at the expense of their neighbours. Nothing belongs more decisively to the English-speaking world than the anecdote. We are for ever telling stories, and how many of those stories are about a Scot (we call it a Scotchman), an Irishman, a Jew, or an American? But this, if our

definition of humour was a sound one, is in the nature of the case. A foreigner is funny, because he is like ourselves only different. A Scot or an Irishman is funny to the Englishman because he is almost exactly like himself, only slightly different. He talks English as his native tongue, only with an incorrect accent; what could possibly be funnier? A Scot is more funny than a Frenchman just as a monkey is more amusing than a dog; he is nearer the real thing.

But, in fact, all such judgments have been distorted beyond recognition by national hypocrisy. It is the English tradition that the Irish are a nation brimming over with humour, quite incapable of taking anything seriously. Irish people are in the habit of saying things which English people think funny. Irish people do not think them funny in the least. It follows, from the English point of view, that Ireland is a nation of incorrigible humorists, all quite incapable of governing themselves. The Scot, on the other hand, has an unfortunate habit of governing the English, and the English, out of revenge, have invented the theory that the Scot has no sense of humour. The Scot cannot have any sense of humour, because he is very careful about money, and drinks whisky where ordinary people drink beer. All the stories told against the Scottish nation are, I am told, invented in Aberdeen, and I partly believe it. There is (if a denationalized Ulsterman like myself may make the criticism) a pawkiness about all the stories against Scotland which betrays their Caledonian origin. The fact is that the Scottish sense of humour differs slightly from the English sense of humour, but I am afraid I have no time to

indicate the difference. There is humour in the country of Stevenson and Barrie; and if the joke is often against Scotland, what better proof could there be that it is humour, and not satire?

Whatever may be said of Americans in real life, it is certain that their literature has humour. Personally I do not think that the Americans are nearly as proud as they ought to be of this fact; Mark Twain ought to be to the American what Burns is to the Scot, and rather more. The hall-mark of American humour is its pose of illiteracy. All the American humorists spend their time making jokes against themselves. Artemus Ward pretended that he was unable even to spell. Mark Twain pretended that he had received no education beyond spelling, and most of his best remarks are based on this affectation of ignorance. "What is your *bête noire*?" asked the revelations-of-character book, and Mark Twain replied, "What is my which?" "He spelt it Vinci, but pronounced it Vinchy; foreigners always spell better than they pronounce"—that is perhaps one of the greatest jokes of literature, but the whole point of it lies in a man pretending to be worse educated than he really is. Mr. Leacock, as a rule, amuses by laughing at himself. America, on the other hand, has very little to show in the way of satire. Lowell was satirical, in a rather heavy vein, and Mr. Leacock is satirical occasionally, in a way that seems to me purely English. I want to allude to that later on; for the present let it be enough to note that the Americans, like the English and the Scots, do possess a literary tradition of non-satirical humour.

Thus far, we have concluded that the humorous in

literature is the preserve of that period which succeeds the French Revolution, and of those peoples which speak the English language under its several denominations; unless by the word humour you understand "satire." It is high time, obviously, that we attempted some definition of what satire is, or at least of the marks by which it can be distinguished from non-satirical humour. It is clear from the outset that the author who laughs at himself, unless the self is a deliberately assumed one, is not writing satire. *Happy Thoughts* and *The Diary of a Nobody* may be what you will; they are not satire. *The Tramp Abroad* is not satire; *My Lady Nicotine* is not satire. For in all these instances the author, with a charity worthy of the Saints—and indeed, St. Philip Neri's life is full of this kind of charity—makes a present of himself to his reader as a laughing-stock. In satire, on the contrary, the writer always leaves it to be assumed that he himself is immune from all the follies and the foibles which he pillories. To take an obvious instance, Dickens is no satirist when he introduces you to Mr. Winkle, because there is not the smallest reason to suppose that Dickens would have handled a gun better than Mr. Winkle. But when Dickens introduces you to Mr. Bumble he is a satirist at once, for it is perfectly obvious that Dickens would have handled a porridge-ladle better than Mr. Bumble did. The humorist runs with the hare; the satirist hunts with the hounds.

There is, indeed, less contempt in satire than in irony. Irony is content to describe men exactly as they are, to accept them professedly, at their own valuation, and then to laugh up its sleeve. It falls outside the limits of humorous literature altogether;



there is irony in Plato, there is irony in the Gospels; Mr. Galsworthy is an ironist, but few people have ever laughed over Mr. Galsworthy. Satire, on the contrary, borrows its weapons from the humorist; the satirized figure must be made to leap through the hoops of improbable adventure and farcical situation. It is all the difference between *The Egoist* and *Don Quixote*. Yet the laughter which satire provokes has malice in it always; we want to dissociate ourselves from the victim; to let the lash that curls round him leave our withers unwrung. It is not so with humour: not so (for instance) with the work of an author who should have been mentioned earlier, Mr. P. G. Wodehouse. To read the adventures of Bertie Wooster as if they were satire on Bertie Wooster, or even on the class to which Bertie Wooster may be supposed to belong, is to misread them in a degree hardly possible to a German critic. The reader must make himself into Bertie Wooster in order to enjoy his Jeeves, just as he must make himself into Eliza's husband in order to enjoy his Eliza. Nobody can appreciate the crackers of humour unless he is content to put on his fool's cap with the rest of the party.

What, then, is the relation between humour and satire? Which is the parent, and which the child? Which is the normal organ, and which the morbid growth? I said just now that satire borrows its weapons from the humorist, and that is certainly the account most of us would be prepared to give of the matter off-hand. Most things in life, we reflect, have their comic side as well as their serious side; and the good-humoured man is he who is content to see the humorous side of things even when the joke is against himself. The comic author, by persistently

abstracting from the serious side of things, contrives to build up a world of his own, whose figures are all grotesques, whose adventures are the happy adventures of farce. Men fight, but only with foils; men suffer, but only suffer indignities; it is all a pleasant nursery tale, a relief to be able to turn to it when your mind is jaded with the sour facts of real life. Such, we fancy, is the true province of the Comic Muse; and satire is an abuse of the function. The satirist is like one who should steal his little boy's water-pistol and load it with vitriol, and so walk abroad flourishing it in men's faces. A treacherous fellow, your satirist. He will beguile the leisure of an Athenian audience, needing some rest, Heaven knows, from the myriad problems of a relentless war with powerful neighbours, by putting on a little play called *The Birds*. Capital; we shall enjoy that. Two citizens of Athens, so the plot runs, take wings to themselves and set out to build a bird city, remote from the daily instance of this subnubilar world. Excellent! That is just what we wanted, a relief for tired brains! And then, the fellow has tricked us, it proves, after all! His city in the clouds is, after all, only a parody of an Athenian colony, and the ceremonies which attend its inauguration are a burlesque, in the worst possible taste, of Athenian colonial policy. We came here for a holiday, and we are being treated to a sermon instead! No wonder the Athenian audiences often refused the first prize to Aristophanes. Skip twenty-one centuries, and find yourself in the times of the early Georges. There has been a great vogue, of late, for descriptions of travel in strange countries; and now (they are saying in the coffee-houses) the Dean of

St. Patrick's, Dublin, has written a burlesque of these travel narratives, about countries that never existed at all—the ingenious dog! And then, as we read, it dawns upon us suddenly that Lilliput and Brobdingnag are not, after all, so distant, so imaginary; in fact, we have never really got away from the England of the Georges at all. The spirit of satire has overlooked us, like a wicked fairy, and turned the milk of human kindness sour as we churned it.

My present thesis, not dogmatically asserted but rather thrown out as if for discussion, is that this way of viewing the relations between humour and satire is a perversion of history. To think of satire as a particular direction which humour may happen to take, a particular channel into which humour may be diverted, is to neglect, surely, the broad facts as we have stated them above. Humour is of an age, satire of all ages; humour is of one particular civilization, satire of all countries. Is it not, then, more reasonable to suppose that satire is a normal function of the human genius, and humour that has no satire in it a perversion of the function, a growth away from the normal? That our sense of the ridiculous is not, in its original application, a child's toy at all, but a weapon, deadly in its efficacy, entrusted to us for exposing the shams and hypocrisies of the world? The tyrant may arm himself in triple mail, may surround himself with bodyguards, may sow his kingdom with a hedge of spies, so that free speech is crushed and criticism muzzled. Nay, worse, he may so debauch the consciences of his subjects with false history and with sophistical argument that they come to believe him the thing he gives himself out for, a creature half-divine, a heaven-sent deliverer.

One thing there is that he still fears; one anxiety still bids him turn this way and that to scan the faces of his slaves. He is afraid of laughter. The satirist stands there, like the little child, in the procession when the Emperor walked through the capital in his famous new clothes; his is the tiny voice that interprets the consciousness of a thousand onlookers: "But, Mother, he has no clothes on at all!"

Satire has a wider scope, too. It is born to scourge the persistent and ever-recurrent follies of the human creature as such. And, for anybody who has the humility to realize that it is aimed at him, and not merely at his neighbours, satire has an intensely remedial effect; it purifies the spiritual system of man as nothing else that is human can possibly do. Thus, every young man who is in love should certainly read *The Egoist* (there would be far less unhappiness in marriage if they all did), and no schoolmaster should ever begin the scholastic year without re-reading Mr. Bradby's *Lanchester Tradition*, to remind him that he is but dust. Satire is thus an excellent discipline for the satirized: whether it is a good thing for the satirist is more open to question. *Facit indignatio versum*; it is seldom that the impetus to write satire comes to a man except as the result of a disappointment. Since disappointment so often springs from love, it is not to be wondered at that satirists have ever dealt unkindly with woman, from the days of Simonides of Amorgos, who compared woman with more than thirty different kinds of animals, in every case to her disadvantage. A pinched, warped fellow, as a rule, your satirist. It is misery that drives men to laughter. It is bad humour that encourages men first to be humorous.

And it is, I think, when good-humoured men pick up this weapon of laughter, and, having no vendettas to work off with it, begin tossing it idly at a mark, that humour without satire takes its origin.

In a word, humour without satire is, strictly speaking, a perversion, the misuse of a sense. Laughter is a deadly explosive which was meant to be wrapped up in the cartridge of satire, and so, aimed unerringly at its appointed target, deal its salutary wound; humour without satire is a flash in the pan; it may be pretty to look at, but it is, in truth, a waste of ammunition. Or, if you will, humour is satire that has run to seed; trained no longer by an artificial process, it has lost the virility of its stock. It is port from the wood, without the depth and mystery of its vintage rivals. It is a burning-glass that has lost its focus; a passenger, pulling no weight in the upstream journey of life; meat that has had the vitamins boiled out of it; a clock without hands. The humorist, in short, is a satirist out of a job; he does not fit into the scheme of things: the world passes him by.

The pure humorist is a man without a message. He can preach no gospel, unless it be the gospel that nothing matters; and that in itself is a foolish theme, for if nothing matters, what does it matter whether it matters or not? Mr. Wodehouse is an instance in point, Mr. Leacock nearly so, though there is a story in *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* about the amalgamation of two religious bodies on strictly commercial lines, which comes very close to pure satire. Barry Pain is a humorist who is seldom at his best when he attempts satire; the same fate dogged Mark Twain, though I think he would have liked to be a

satirist. Mr. A. A. Milne is in a similar case, and so indeed are all the modern *Punch* writers by the terms (you might say) of their contract. No contrast is more surprising than the contrast in atmosphere between the letterpress of *Punch* before 1890 and its letterpress since. The old *Punches* are full of very bad satire; there is hardly anything else in them; it is all on the same sort of level as *John Bull* in its Bottomley days—anti-aristocratic, anti-foreign, anti-clerical, very much like some rag of the Boulevards. To-day, it is the home of superbly finished humour—humour cultivated as a fine art. But satire is absent.

Some of the greatest humorists have halted between two destinies, and as a rule have been lost to satire. Sir W. S. Gilbert, a rather unsuccessful satirist in his early days, inherited the dilemma from his master, Aristophanes. *Patience* is supreme satire, and there is satire in all the operas; but in their general effect they do not tell: the author has given up to mankind what was meant for a party. Mr. Chesterton is in the same difficulty; he is like Johnson's friend who tried to be a philosopher, but cheerfulness would keep on coming in. The net effect of his works is serious, as it is meant to be, but his fairy-like imagination is for ever defeating its own object in matters of detail. But indeed, Mr. Chesterton is beyond our present scope; for he is rash enough to combine humour not merely with satire but with serious writing; and that, it is well known, is a thing the public will not stand. A few modern authors have succeeded, in spite of our latter-day demand for pure humour, in being satirists first and last: Samuel Butler of *Erewhon*, and W. H. Mallock, and Mr. Belloc, I think, in his political novels. The very

poor reception given to these last by the public proves that there is more vinegar in them than oil.

Humour, if we may adopt for a moment the loathsome phraseology of journalism, has "come to stay." It is, if our analysis be true, a by-product and in a sense a waste-product; that does not mean that it has no significance. A pearl is a by-product, and from the fishmonger's point of view a waste-product; but it has value so long as people want it. And there is at present a public demand for humour which implies that humour should take its place among the arts, an art for the art's sake, not depending on any fruits of practical utility for its estimation. There is art in O. Henry, though he does not scourge our vices like Juvenal; there is art in Heath Robinson, though he does not purge our consciences like Hogarth. What rank humour is to take as compared with the serious writing is, perhaps, an unanswerable problem; our histories of nineteenth century literature have not yet been bold enough to tackle it. It is probable, I think, that humour is relatively ephemeral; by force of words humour means caprice, and the caprice of yesterday is apt to leave us cold. There is a generation not yet quite dead which says that nothing was ever so funny as the *Bongaultier Ballads*. The popularity of the *Ingoldsby Legends* is now, to say the least, precarious; and I doubt if the modern youth smacks its lips as we did over the *Bab Ballads* themselves. Read a book of A. A. Milne's, and then turn to an old volume of *Voces Populi*, and you will realize that even in our memory humour has progressed and become rarefied. What reputations will be left unassailable when the tide has receded, it would be

rash to prophesy. For myself, I like to believe that one name will be immortal at least, that of Mr. Max Beerbohm. Incomparably equipped for satire, as his cartoons and his parodies show, he has yet preferred in most of his work to give rein to a gloriously fantastic imagination, a humorist in satirist's clothing. One is tempted to say with the prophet: May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!

Meanwhile, a pertinent question may be raised, What will be the effect of all this modern vogue for pure humour upon the prospects of satiric writing? We are in danger, it seems to me, of debauching our sense of the ridiculous to such an extent as to leave no room for the disciplinary effect of satire. I remember seeing Mr. Shaw's *Press Cuttings* first produced in Manchester. I remember a remark, in answer to the objection that women ought not to vote because they do not fight, that a woman risks her life every time a man is born, being received (in Manchester!) with shouts of happy laughter. In that laughter I read the tragedy of Mr. Bernard Shaw. He lashes us with virulent abuse, and we find it exquisitely amusing. Other ages have stoned the prophets; ours pelts them instead with the cauliflower bouquets of the heavy comedian. No country, I suppose, has greater need of a satirist to-day than the United States of America; no country has a greater output of humour, good and bad, which is wholly devoid of any satirical quality. If a great American satirist should arise, would his voice be heard among the hearty guffaws which are dismally and eternally provoked by Mutt, Jeff, Felix, and other kindred abominations? And have we, on this side of the



## NOTES

(N.B.—The figures in Clarendon type refer to pages.)

### THE ART OF BOOK-MAKING

WASHINGTON IRVING, b. 1783, d. 1859, the first American writer to achieve a reputation outside his native country, is best known by his *Sketch Book*, *Bracebridge Hall* and *Tales of a Traveller*, miscellaneous collections of essays, short stories, and sketches of places and people he had seen and met on his travels. His other works include the burlesque *History of New York*, the *Life of Columbus* and the *Conquest of Granada*.

17. doom: judgment.

Synesius: 370-414, a native of Cyrene. He sat at the feet of Hypatia (see Kingsley's novel of that title). He was later converted to Christianity and became Bishop of Ptolemais.

18. familiar: demon attendant to a witch.

19. "pure English, undefiled": "Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled" (Spenser, *Faerie Queene*).

20. "line upon line . . .": Isaiah xxviii. 10.

21. sleep with their fathers: like the kings of Israel and Judah.

22. Monmouth Street: now part of Shaftesbury Avenue; formerly noted for second-hand clothes shops, just as Wardour Street close by was once the resort of antique furniture dealers. Hence M.-S. finery = tawdry pretentious clothes; and W.-S. English = pseudo-archaic diction.

23. Primrose Hill: N. of Regent's Park.

"babbling . . . fields": thus Falstaff died: see Shak., *Hen. V*, II. iii.

pragmatical: dogmatic, meddlesome.

24. the portraits became animated: cf. Gilbert's opera *Ruddigore*, Act II.

Beaumont and Fletcher: collaborated 1606-16 in writing plays, e.g. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

Castor and Pollux: twin sons of Zeus—guardians of sailors—later turned into the constellation *Gemini*. Hence the expletive.

Ben Jonson: poet and dramatist (1573-1637): served in the English Army in Flanders up to 1592.

farragos: medleys.

Patroclus: bosom-friend of Achilles, killed by Hector in the Trojan War. His body was recovered by the Greeks only by hard fighting.

"chopped, bald shot": Shak., 2 *Hen. IV*, III. ii., "a lean, old marksman." Pursy = fat, short-winded.

25. learned Theban: see Shak., *King Lear*, III. iv.

### GRACE BEFORE MEAT

CHARLES LAMB, b. 1775, d. 1834, essayist, poet, critic; clerk in the East India Co. 1792-1825; author, with his sister Mary, of *Tales from Shakespeare*; contributed essays under the pseudonym

"Elia" to the *London Magazine*; collected volumes of his essays were published in 1823 and 1833 under the titles *Essays of Elia* and *Last Essays of Elia*.

26. manducation: chewing.

27. commending . . . assembled: sheer nonsensical exuberance. compiling: the old present participle *passive*.

Rabelæsiān: like Rabelais, whose writings are marked by flowery language and coarse satirical humour.

unprovocative: i.e. of appetite.

foreign: i.e. alien, unconnected with the indulgence of sensual appetite.

*rarus hospes*: infrequent guest.

28. orgasm: excitement.

impertinent: out of place, pointless.

epicurism: sensual gratification.

29. still small voice: see 1 Kings xix. 12.

Jeshurun: see Deut. xxxii. 15.

Celæno: one of the harpies—half-women, half-birds—who "seized and devoured Aeneas' banquet and defiled all things with their filthy touch" (Virgil, *Aeneid* III).

gris-amber-steam'd: steamed with ambergris, a waxlike substance once used in cooking.

30. freshet: rush of fresh water flowing into the sea.

Pontus: the Black Sea. Lucrine bay: adjoining the Bay of Naples.

cates: choice food.

gaudy: college feast.

Heliogabalus: a Roman Emperor (204-22) notorious for his gluttony and debauchery.

Cherith: see 1 Kings xvii. 3.

31. pulse: peas, beans, lentils, etc.

32. C—: meant to be Coleridge, but it is more likely to be a dictum of Lamb's own.

gust: gusto (Sp.)=taste.

sapidless: flavourless.

puts . . . tenour: upsets my equanimity.

author of the *Rambler*: Dr. Johnson.

Dagon: a Philistine deity, half-god, half-fish.

33. Chartreuse: the Carthusian monastery.

organs . . . Hog's Norton: cf. old English proverb, "Thou wast born at Hoggs-Norton, where piggs play upon the organs," i.e. a place noted for boorishness.

34. Lucian: Greek satirist; he attacked the superstitious beliefs of his times (2nd century A.D.).

flamens: priests.

*non . . . locus*: that was not the proper occasion for those things.

35. *horresco referens*: I shudder when I relate.

## ON THE WANT OF MONEY

WILLIAM HAZLITT, b. 1788, d. 1830, critic and essayist, a friend of Lamb, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt. Studied for the ministry and tried portrait-painting before devoting himself to writing and lecturing. *Table Talk*, *Winterslow* and *Sketches and Essays*, the two last being published posthumously, contain his best essays on miscellaneous subjects. Hazlitt was a born rebel, always happiest when arguing violently. His humour was often cynical, and he was very independent and contemptuous of patronage, as will be evident from this essay.

37. Fuller: Thomas Fuller (1608-61), author of *The Worthies of England*. Lamb calls him "the dear, fine, silly old angel."

Slough of Despond: in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

38. Mr. Sheridan: Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), dramatist and orator. His plays *The Rivals*, *School for Scandal* and *The Critic* raised the Comedy of Manners from the vulgarity and licentiousness of the Restoration period. Always impecunious, he was arrested for debt in 1813, but remained reckless and extravagant, and was burdened with debts and dogged by misfortunes right up to his death.

39. jackal: the j. is supposed to hunt a lion's prey for him; hence metaphorically = a person who does preparatory drudgery.

41. "screw . . . sticking-place": Shak., *Macbeth*, I. vii.

42. "as kind . . . coronation-day": Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, 271.

43. *English Malthus* . . . : Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), economist, who in his *Principle of Population* maintained that the earth's produce could never be sufficient to maintain its population, and that, unless the increase of population were checked, there would always be a number of people on the verge of starvation. John Ramsay MacCulloch (1789-1864) was a Professor of Political Economy.

"of formal cut": see Shak., *As You Like It*, II. vii.

*Gil Blas*: by Le Sage, translated into English by Smollett (1749); a satiric picture of Spanish life.

de Verry: a famous Parisian *restaurateur*.

Apicius: a Roman epicure of the 1st century A.D.; a "millionaire" who, when he found he had only about £80,000 left, committed suicide rather than face the misery of plain fare!

Amelia: the heroine of a novel by Fielding (1751).

Caleb: the old butler in Walter Scott's novel, *The Bride of Lammermuir*. In his efforts to maintain the fallen dignity of the family he served, he resorted to various absurd devices.

44. "And ever . . . airs!": Milton, *L'Allegro*, 135-6. *Eating* in the original = *edax*, i.e. consuming, gnawing.

*Life of Colonel Jack*: published 1722. Colonel J. was a waif who became a pickpocket and then enlisted. He was kidnapped and sold to a planter in Virginia. He rose to be overseer and

eventually won his liberty and turned planter himself. He made a fortune and then returned to England.

45. *City Madam*: a play by Massinger (1632) in which Luke is the prodigal brother of Sir J. Frugal.

47. "by . . . art": Shak., *Tempest*, V. i. 50.

"We know . . .": Shak., *Hamlet*, IV. v. 42.

49. Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*: a series of caricatures satirizing the manners of the day by Hogarth, painter and engraver (1697-1764).

50. one man: probably Francis Jeffrey (1773-1850), first editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.

51. attic taste: cf. Milton, *Sonnet to Mr. Lawrence*.

55. harpies: cf. n. to p. 29.

a consummation . . . wished: Shak., *Hamlet*, III. i.

"pure . . . mind": a translation of a passage from Claudian.

Thomas Wedgewood: 1771-1805; son of Josiah, the famous pottery manufacturer; friend and patron of Coleridge.

56. "we . . . Caucasus": cf. Shak., *Richard II*, I. iii.

tilbury: a gig, so-called from the maker.

## A CHAPTER ON HATS

JOHN HENRY LEIGH HUNT, b. 1784, d. 1850, educated, like his friends Coleridge and Lamb, at Christ's Hospital. Wrote essays and literary criticisms for the *Examiner*, which he and his brother founded in 1808, and later for the *Indicator*. He did much to encourage the youthful Keats, and was associated with Shelley and Byron in editing the *Liberal*. As a critic he showed good taste and sound judgment; as an essayist he is gay and sprightly, free from Lamb's whimsicality and Hazlitt's prejudice; his verse hardly ever reaches the heights of poetry.

61. Chelsea pensioners: veterans living in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, founded by Charles II and built by Wren; often conspicuous in London streets during the summer from their scarlet uniforms; but they no longer wear cocked hats.

Mr. Stothard: 1755-1834, painter and illustrator.

have our pique out against: vent our ill-feeling on.

62. the flat opera hat: or gibus, is once again in favour.

pit . . . sawdust: the pit and the gallery in Hunt's day were strewn with sawdust—the habits of the frequenters made this necessary!

63. at our school: Christ's Hospital; the custom still prevails; and the boys still wear the friar's dress (*see* below).

64. moulded on a porringer, etc.: Shak., *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. iii. 64.

65. Canova: Italian sculptor (1757-1822).

ingenious . . . umbrella: the *sombrero* familiar in Andalusia.

67. had not yet lost, etc.: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I. 591 (adapted to suit the context).

Paul: Emperor of Russia 1796-1801.

Cortes: the Spanish "parliament."

De Courcys: John de Courcy (d. 1219), who conquered

Ulster, championed King John on one occasion, and received this privilege as a reward.

### HAPPY GUESSING

JOHN BROWN, M.D., b. 1810, d. 1882, best known as the author of *Horæ Subsecivæ* (Leisure Hours), a collection of miscellaneous essays, in which occurs the pathetic story of a dog, *Rab and his Friends*.

69. Dr. Chalmers: Scottish theologian and economist (1780-1847).

70. *totus in illo*: engrossed, completely absorbed; cf.

*Nescio quid meditans nugurum, totus in illis.*

HORACE, *Satires*, I. ix. 2.

wonderful old Greek: Aristotle.

71. *in vacuo*: in a vacuum.

Miss Austen: Jane Austen (1775-1817), the novelist, author of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, etc.

75. Sir John Moore: the hero of Corunna (1809).

Sir John Cope: "a little dressy finical man," the general defeated by the Young Pretender at Prestonpans during the '45.

### CITY OF LONDON CHURCHES

CHARLES DICKENS, b. 1812, d. 1870, is one of the greatest novelists of all time, and the characters he created, odd, humorous, and pathetic, have become "household words" wherever the English language is spoken. Although his fame rests chiefly on his novels, he ranks high among English essayists, and much of his best work is contained in the *Uncommercial Traveller* from which this essay is taken.

76. highly . . . electricity: i.e. from vigorous rubbing with soap (Lat. *sapo*). A typical Dickensian phrase.

haled: dragged.

Boanerges: "son of thunder."

Charade: a game in which a whole word has to be guessed from written or acted clues to each syllable and the whole.

of wrath: objects of divine displeasure—a Hebraism. See Ephesians ii. 3.

78. Gower's tomb: John Gower (c. 1330-1408), the friend of Chaucer, author of *Confessio Amantis*.

region of Whittington: Whittington's house was in College Hill, Dowgate, off Cannon Street, E.C., near the church of St. Michael Paternoster Royal in which he was buried. But the phrase may be used loosely. The churches Dickens mentions are difficult to identify; possibly some of them, like the Church of St. Michael at the corner of Huggin Lane, and Allhallows the Great in Thomas Street, Dowgate, have been pulled down since his day.

79. flue: fluff, substance formed by loose particles of cotton.

82. comet vintages: vintages of a comet year, of supposedly superior quality.

83. young St. Anthony: i.e. the victim of the devil's temptation, like St. Anthony the Great (4th century).

84. Huggin Lane: so-called, according to Stow, from one Hugar

who lived there; it runs off Wood Street, in Cheapside (*see n. above*).

85. *spencer*: short jersey, so called after Earl Spencer, d. 1845.

88. *pomatum*: scented ointment for hair or skin.

*Rake's Progress*: *see n. to p. 49*.

90. *Trained Bands*: city militia of the 17th century.

### OGRES

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, b. 1811, d. 1863, like Dickens, is known chiefly from his great novels *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *Esmond* and *The Newcomes*, and his essays are often neglected. Most of them were contributed regularly by him to the *Cornhill*, a literary magazine of which he became editor in 1860, and were afterwards collected in a volume entitled *Roundabout Papers*. The subjects of these essays were often trifling enough, and their material commonplace, but the language is simple and lucid, conversational but never slovenly, "familiar but not coarse," in the true Addisonian tradition.

93. *contretemps*: untoward happening.

94. *whipping-snapping*: insignificant.

*hasty-pudding*: batter pudding.

*couteau de chasse*: hunting-knife.

96. *hectors*: blustering bullies.

98. *tu quoque*: "you're another!"

won't . . . dinner?: cf. *Grace Before Meat*.

*pumps*: patent-leather slippers.

99. *ratelier*: set of teeth.

*pâté-de-foie-gras*: paste made from liver of geese fattened specially for the purpose—a great delicacy.

*Cornish mines*: tin mines—speculative enterprises in which people were tempted to sink their money.

*Rothschild and Baring*: bankers; cf. W. S. Gilbert in the *Nightmare Song* in *Iolanthe*.

The shares were a penny

And ever so many

Were taken by Rothschild and Baring.

100. *Polyphemus* . . . *Sirens*: the one-eyed giant and women-fish enticers encountered by Odysseus on his wanderings.

101. *curvets*: "horse's leap with fore-legs raised together and hind-legs raised with a spring before the fore-legs reached the ground" (*Concise Oxf. Dict.*).

*Gillott's iron*: i.e. a nib made by Jos. Gillott & Sons.

*Pegasus*: the winged horse of the Muses.

*Flibbertigibbet*: "the foul fiend who walks at night, gives the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip" (*Shak., King Lear*). The nickname given to Dickie Sludge in *Scott's Kenilworth*.

*Ogre Humbug*: the ogre against whom Thackeray waged war all his life.

## TARASCON

HENRY JAMES, b. 1843, d. 1916, a native of New York, began his literary career by writing for the *Atlantic Monthly*. His literary output was prodigious—novels, stories, travel-sketches, criticism and biography. His novels are remarkable for their subtle and analytic character studies, and comparative lack of incident. From 1880 until his death he lived in England, and in 1915 became a naturalized Englishman. In 1916 he received the Order of Merit. James had a wide circle of literary friends—Daudet and Flaubert in France, the Russian Turgenieff, and in England Gosse, Stevenson and Arthur Benson.

102. Nîmes: Nîmes, Arles, Tarascon, Beaucaire and Avignon are all towns in Provence (the first *provincia* of the Roman Empire). Provence is one of the most fertile districts of France and covers the basin of the Lower Rhône and Durance. It also contains many striking Roman and medieval architectural remains. The temperament of its people is happy and sunny like its climate; they are intensely proud of their province and jealous of its traditions.

Alphonse Daudet: b. 1840, d. 1897, a native of Nîmes, the French Dickens. *Tartarin de Tarascon*, *Tartarin sur les Alpes*, and *Tartarin Voyageur* are rollicking extravaganzas in which he burlesques his fellow-Provençals. He also wrote some charming short stories—*Lettres de mon Moulin* and *Contes du Lundi*. It is to one of the latter, *La Défense de Tarascon*, that James refers a few lines below.

103. King René: the Good (1409-80); his daughter Margaret married Henry VI of England. He was Duke of Anjou, and by hereditary right King of Naples, but he never established his claim to that kingdom. He devoted himself to the encouragement of art and literature and founded numerous charities—hence his name “the Good.”

106. Montmorencys: the best known are Anne (1493-1567) and his grandson Henri (1595-1632), both Marshals of France.

107. Magasin du Louvre: the Parisian Selfridge's.

Arlesian head-dress: a most becoming kind of mantilla.

108. Saint Martha: the sister of Mary and Lazarus. A legend tells how she and many other disciples of Christ sailed to Marseilles, and from there spread the gospel among the cities of Provence. St. Martha settled in Tarascon, where a *tarasque*—a species of crocodile—was alarming the people. “Leading a company of people who were brave enough to follow her, she went to the lair of the beast, and making the sign of the cross, tied the neck of the animal with her girdle.”

## THE POEMS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

ANDREW LANG, b. 1844, d. 1912, classical scholar and a prolific and versatile man of letters. He wrote some dainty and graceful verse, history and historical romances, biography, essays, and literary criticism. He made, with S. H. Butcher, the most suc-

cessful prose translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. He is known to generations of children from his *Blue, Red, Green and Olive Fairy Books*. This essay is taken from *Essays in Little*.  
*Preliminary note.* The chief narrative poems of Sir Walter Scott are *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *Rokeby* (1812), and *Lord of the Isles* (1815).

The publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was something of an event to a public a little wearied of the "decorous strains of the Augustans" and as yet hardly acquainted with Wordsworth or Coleridge. It was a story in rhyme which the simplest could understand, and the magic of the galloping verse and the strange atmosphere of romance were new and pleasant surprises. It is said that the *Lay* found eager and thrilled hearers among the British soldiers serving with Wellington in the Peninsular War. N.B.—For a sketch map showing the places mentioned in this essay see page 15.

110. Lord Cranstoun's goblin-page: the mysterious Gilpin Horner, whose doings were a legend in the Border Country.

113. lyke-wake: watch kept at night over a dead body.

115. stand of Aias: or Ajax; see *Iliad*, XIV. 409 ff.

slaying of the Wooers: see *Odyssey*, XXII.

songs and ballads: Scott had Shakespeare's gift of writing unforgettable snatches of song, which appear in his novels and metrical romances with exquisite aptness. *The Outlaw*, the fourth stanza of which is quoted here, is reprinted in the *Golden Treasury*, No. 170, and Palgrave there draws attention to the "peculiar skill with which Scott employs proper names—nor is there a surer sign of high poetical genius." The second quotation is from *The Rover* (G.T., 194), which appeared originally in *Rokeby*.

117. "Eve of St. John": one of Scott's contributions to *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802) in which were put on record old ballads which were fast being forgotten.

118. "One crowded hour . . .": from the heading to Chapter 34 in the novel *Old Mortality*.

## FALSTAFF

GEORGE HEYNES RADFORD, b. 1851, d. 1917, knighted 1916, school-fellow and friend of Augustine Birrell, was admitted a solicitor in 1872, served on the L.C.C. from 1895 to 1907, and was M.P. for East Islington from 1906 until his death. He wrote two volumes of occasional verse, and contributed this essay to Birrell's *Obiter Dicta* in 1887.

*Preliminary note.* Most of the information about Falstaff in this essay is drawn from his own or his friends' utterances in those plays of Shakespeare in which he appears as a character, particularly *Henry IV*, Part I and Part II, and in a lesser degree *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. If the essay tempts readers to refer to those plays, or to the Falstaffian episodes in



them, no one, I imagine, would have been more gratified than its author.

120. Sir James Stephen: 1829-94, the eminent jurist, brother of Sir Leslie Stephen (*see* below).

121. P. P.: Jonathan Swift often disguised his authorship under fictitious names; e.g. his famous *Drapier's Letters* were signed M. B. Drapier. So a work ridiculing Bishop Burnet's *History of My Own Times* was signed "P. P. Clerk of the Parish."

122. peppercorn . . . brewer's horse: i.e. something ridiculously small or exceedingly stupid. *See* 1 *Henry IV*, III. iii. for the references here and in the subsequent paragraph.

123. Gargantua: a prince of gigantic stature, a mighty eater and drinker, but studious, athletic and good-humoured.

124. sack-stained: F. was inordinately fond of sack (sherry). *See* below.

125. Squier: as described in the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; *crull*, curled; *deliver*, nimble; *endite*, recite; *nightertale*, night-time.

Clement's Inn: one of the Inns of Court in the Strand. In F.'s time the Inns of Court corresponded to our universities.

Mr. Micawber: *see* Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

*Amici fures temporis*: "friends are the thieves of time."

126. Swinge-bucklers: swashbucklers.

backswordsman: fencer at single-stick. For most of the references in this and the next paragraph, *see* 2 *Henry IV*, III. ii.

127. mandrake: mandragora, has a root like a "forked radish." over-scutch'd: over-beaten. *See* *Henry V*, V. 1. 85.

witty . . . others: *see* 2 *Henry IV*, I. ii.

129. demure: grave, sober. *See* 2 *Henry IV*, IV. iii.

Antic: buffoon, grotesque figure. 1 *Henry IV*, I. ii. 52.

Benchers: senior members of Inns of Court.

131. *multum bibi, nunquam pransi*: I have drunk much, but I have never dined. A quotation from *Barnabee's Journal*, by Richard Brathwaite (c. 1588-1673)—"a sprightly record of English travel in Latin and English doggerel verse"; reprinted in 18th century under the title of *Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys*.

132. parcel-gilt: part-gilt; for this passage *see* 2 *Henry IV*, II. i.

134. Miss Braddon: novelist (1837-1915), mother of W. B. Maxwell, the novelist and newspaper correspondent.

Canon Farrar: 1831-1903, Canon of Westminster. Dean of Canterbury. Author of *Life of Christ* (1874), referred to here, and *Eric, or Little by Little*.

135. Gervinus: 1805-71, a professor at Göttingen. His commentaries on Shakespeare were translated into English in 1862.

136. Byron: *see* *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, Stanzas 1 and 2.

### A CYNIC'S APOLOGY

LESLIE STEPHEN, b. 1832, d. 1902, was a scholar of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he won distinction both as an oarsman and a runner. He had already been Clark Lecturer in English

Literature when, as a result of constant work for *Frazer's Magazine*, the *Fortnightly*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Saturday Review*, he became editor of the *Cornhill*, in which this essay originally appeared. He left the *Cornhill* to edit the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Throughout his life he was a keen sportsman and mountaineer, and he wrote a fascinating book on mountaineering—*The Playground of Europe*.

**Title.** A cynic, in the modern sense, is one who, outwardly at any rate, professes contempt for human nature in general, distrusts the purity of human motives, and scoffs at any display of feeling, enthusiasm and sentimentality especially. In W. H. Mallock's *New Republic*, Book I, Chapter I, there is an interesting discussion on the meaning of the term. Apology = defence (Gk. ἀπολογία).

137. who . . . scorner: see Psalm i. 1.

dyspeptic: jaundiced; the sort of views induced by an attack of indigestion or dyspepsia.

138. pterodactyle: a prehistoric monster.

cakes and ale: a jolly good time; cf. "beer and skittles."

139. economy: organization, management.

Lincoln: Abraham (1809-65), President U.S.A. 1860-1865, framer of political aphorisms.

apologue: a fable, with special emphasis on the instruction conveyed by it.

"chin-fly": a species of horse-fly.

pachydermatous: thick-skinned.

spit . . . gaberdine: see Shak., *Merchant of Venice*.

140. boating-man: in L.S.'s day oarsmen in training ate colossal breakfasts in which steaks or chops often figured.

fellowship: dignity of a senior member of a college.

"from China to Peru": opening lines of Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

141. marmot: rodent of the squirrel family.

Union: club and debating society.

freshman: raw undergraduate.

Thackeray: See previous biographical note. L.S. married T.'s younger daughter.

Porson: the great classical scholar (1759-1808).

senior wrangler: placed first in the Mathematical Tripos (=Honours Examination).

142. littlegoes: admission examinations corresponding to *Responsions* at Oxford.

prig: a person who pretends to superior knowledge.

143. esoteric: belonging to an inner circle of privileged disciples. eloquent writer: M. Arnold (1822-88); see *Culture and Anarchy*, in which he first uses the term *Philistine* to represent a despiser of culture.

shibboleth: catchword; see Judges xii. 6.

checks and balances: see Chapter VII of Bagehot's *English Constitution*.

145. "lion": a celebrity shown off at social gatherings.

146. cant: hypocritical pretensions.

inordinate: immoderate; see Colossians iii. 5.

Keats: was bitterly attacked by Lockhart in *Blackwood's* and Croker in the *Quarterly*.

Rosalind's words: Shak., *As You Like It*, IV. i.

Fielding: author of *Tom Jones*, "the greatest English novel."

147. metaphysical: speculative philosophical inquiry.

"one . . . help": part of the famous letter addressed by Dr. Johnson to Lord Chesterfield, the rich nobleman who treated him so ungraciously.

Galileo's profession of faith: Galileo (1564-1642) incurred the censure of ecclesiastics from his bold advocacy of the Copernican system. He was summoned before the Inquisition and condemned to abjure his scientific beliefs. The story goes that after his recantation, he exclaimed, *sotto voce*, "E pur si muove"—"And yet it (i.e. the earth) *does* move."

148. phalanx: serried ranks in the form of a wedge.

Sydney Smith: wit (1771-1845).

149. *Nolumus . . . mutari*: "we do not wish the laws of England to be changed." According to Bacon, the nobles said this on one occasion in Parliament.

vestrymen: parish councillors.

Bumbledom: fussy officialism—derived from Bumble, the officious beadle in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, cf. p. 216.

Mr. Mill: John Stuart Mill (1806-73), an advanced Liberal.

Mr. Bright: John Bright (1811-89), Radical and Free Trade orator.

lawn sleeves: worn by bishops; lawn=fine linen.

No . . . fool: Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 184.

150. buncombe: a town in N. Carolina whose representative in Congress persisted in addressing that assembly needlessly, in order to impress his constituents. Hence=claptrap, humbug (now usually spelt *bunkum*).

flummery: empty words, trifles, nonsense.

151. Mumbo Jumbo: grotesque idol, the object of blind and unreasoning worship.

152. Brummagem imitations: cheap and nasty copies of the real thing, made in Birmingham.

### QUIS DESIDERIO . . . ?

SAMUEL BUTLER, b. 1835, d. 1902, rebelled against his parents' wishes that he should take orders, emigrated to New Zealand where he ran a successful sheep farm, and returned to England to study painting. He exhibited several pictures at the Academy between 1868 and 1876. His later years he devoted to writing. *Erewhon* (and its sequel *Erewhon Revisited*) is a satirical romance, describing a Utopia where crime is a disease and disease a crime. *Alps and Sanctuaries* is a travel book "com-

binning wit and humour with a keen appreciation of beauty of scenery and the character of the people." His *Way of All Flesh*, acclaimed by Galsworthy as "the greatest novel in the English language," is in great part an autobiography.

Title: Horace, *Odes*, I. 24.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
Tam cari capitis?

translated: Why blush at our regret for the loss of such a dear friend?

154. Wilkie Collins: novelist, author of *The Woman in White* (1860), an early "thriller."

156. Lucy: to appreciate B.'s ribaldry you must read Wordsworth's poem beginning, "She dwelt among the untrodden ways." It is easily accessible in the *Golden Treasury*.

159. the young lady . . . : as you may not be able to find Moore's poem, I quote the extract referred to:

Oh! ever thus, from childhood's hour,  
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;  
I never lov'd a tree or flow'r,  
But 'twas the first to fade away.  
I never nurs'd a dear gazelle,  
To glad me with its soft black eye,  
But when it came to know me well,  
And love me, it was sure to die!

THOMAS MOORE, *Lalla Rookh*,  
*The Fire Worshippers*, 279-86.

This passage has often been parodied: e.g.

I never rear'd a young gazelle,  
(Because, you see, I never tried);  
But had it known and loved me well,  
No doubt the creature would have died.  
My rich and aged Uncle John,  
Has known me long and loves me well,  
But still persists in living on—  
I would he were a young gazelle.

and

I never had a piece of toast  
Particularly long and wide,  
But fell upon the sanded floor,  
And always on the buttered side.

160. Lottie Venne: a variety artiste.

161. Dr. Parr: 1747-1825, wrote Johnson's epitaph in St. Paul's.

162. Samuel Butler, bishop: 1774-1839, Headmaster of Shrewsbury, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield.

Samuel Butler, poet: 1612-80, author of the verse satire *Hudibras*.

163. *Analogy*: of Religion (1736) by Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham; in it is discussed the credibility of miracles, of a future life, of revelations and other doctrines.

164. Dr. Garnett: Keeper of the Printed Books in the B.M. (1835-1906).

Mr. Mudie: founder of Mudie's Circulating Library (1818-90).

Mr. Darwin: author of *The Origin of Species*.

### A DEFENCE OF DETECTIVE STORIES

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON, b. 1874, d. 1936, won the Milton poetry prize at St. Paul's School for a poem on St. Francis Xavier. After studying art at the Slade School, where he improved his strikingly original talent for decorative and grotesque drawing, he turned to journalism. His first novel, *Napoleon of Notting Hill*, is a wild riot of fantastic nonsense. In 1911 appeared the first collection of detective stories named after *Father Brown*, and he continued to write them at intervals until his death. He wrote many poems of very considerable merit, and his essays, in which he delighted in startling paradoxes, showed a light and whimsical touch, although very often it concealed a serious purpose. Chesterton deliberately defended the traditional or conventional point of view (cf. Knox's estimate, p. 222). The poetry and romance latent in a great city is a favourite theme of his, e.g. in *Napoleon of Notting Hill* and *The Club of Queer Trades*.

167. Stevenson: e.g. in the *New Arabian Nights*, *Prince Otto*, etc. popular art . . . costume: especially in the Middle Ages, when people were unsophisticated and had not developed an "historical sense."

168. *Hamlet*: this essay was written before Sir Barry Jackson produced *Hamlet* in modern dress.

### WALKER MILES

ARTHUR HUGH SIDGWICK, b. 1882, d. 1917, held an important post in the Board of Education and had a large part in drafting the Fisher Education Bill. He was fatally wounded in France in 1917. He wrote *The Promenade Ticket*, a series of imaginary letters written by various people who shared a season ticket for the "Proms" and who record their views—low-brow ranging to high-brow—on the musical fare provided; *Walking Essays*, from which this essay is taken; and *Jones's Wedding*, a "tale in rhymed prose," published posthumously.

170. Macaulay's New Zealander: "She (i.e. the R.C. Church) may still exist in undiminished vigour, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's." Review of Ranke's *History of the Popes*.

Bradshaw: *Railway Guide*, Whitaker's *Almanack*, Crockford's *Clerical Directory*, Hazell's *Annual*, Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates*, Kelly's *Directory*. To this list might be added *Wisden*; see n. to p. 230.

anthropomorphic instinct: i.e. for personification.

175. casuistry: the application of general rules to particular

cases which disclose peculiar circumstances is one form of casuistry.

176. Nemesis: vengeance personified.

177. parvenus: new-comers, upstarts.

Pompeius: cleared the Mediterranean of pirates in a six-weeks campaign, 67 B.C.

178. tropes: figures of speech.

179. stringendo: working up to a climax.

Thucydides: the first "scientific" historian.

180. Shakespearean sense: see *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III.

ii. "Lord, what fools these mortals be."

*East Lynne*: a popular romance by Mrs. Henry Wood (1814-87).

181. Socratic irony: Socrates' way with the Sophists was to entice them to display their supposed knowledge, meanwhile feigning ignorance himself, and then he would proceed to show that their knowledge was a tissue of inconsistencies.

*Exegi monumentum: aere perennius*—Horace, *Odes*, III. 30; "I have achieved a memorial more lasting than brass."

Elysian plain: *Elysium* in classical mythology was the abode of the blessed dead.

## ON EXPRESSION

JOHN GALSWORTHY, b. 1867, d. 1933, achieved a very high reputation as a writer of novels, plays, short stories and essays. *The Forsyte Saga*, a series of novels dealing with middle-class life of the period covered by his own family history, is already a classic. His plays, *The Silver Box*, *Strife*, *Justice*, *The Skin Game* and *Loyalties* are some of the outstanding plays of the century. Some of his best short stories have been collected in a companion volume in this Heritage of Literature Series. This essay is taken from *Castles in Spain*, and was originally delivered as his presidential address to the English Association.

184. "Tess": in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, considered by many to be Thomas Hardy's masterpiece. "Esther" is the heroine of George Moore's *Esther Waters*.

*Cranford*: a picture of genteel life in Knutsford, by Mrs. Gaskell (1853). *The Golden Age* (1895) by Kenneth Grahame, the author of *The Wind in the Willows*. *The Purple Land* (1865) by W. H. Hudson.

*Huckleberry Finn*: a companion tale to *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens). See reference in R. A. Knox's *On Humour and Satire*, p. 215.

185. contemporary novel: e.g. Mr. J. B. Priestley's *Good Companions* among many others.

Tchekov: 1860-1904, a Russian dramatist and short story writer. A play by him is reprinted in *One Act Comedies* in this series.

Katherine Mansfield: 1888-1923, short story writer. See *The*

Fly, a story of her in *Short Stories by Modern Writers* in this series.

186. worm in the bud: cf. Shak., *Twelfth Night*, II. iv.

"She never told her love;  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek."

azure stockings: a blue-socking is a woman affecting deep learning.

iodoform: antiseptic.

transatlantic writer: Gertrude Stein?

187. Y.Y.: Robert Lynd writes weekly essays under this pseudonym in the *New Statesman*. See *Essays by Modern Writers* in this series.

draperies and indolence: an example of *sylllepsis*.

188. "Polly": a burlesque opera, sequel to the *Beggar's Opera*, by Gay (1685-1732). Revived recently by Sir Nigel Playfair.

190. "Fire him out": cf. Shak., *King Lear*, V. iii., "Fire us hence."

American language: the Americans can claim to be the direct descendants of the Elizabethans in the fertility of their inventiveness and their gift for coining picturesque expressions. "Get a move on," "dead-beat," "come-down," "down-and-out," "know the ropes," "face the music" are all in the true Elizabethan tradition.

*Babbitt*: by Sinclair Lewis (b. 1885), a picture of a self-satisfied American business man.

O'Neill: b. 1888, the greatest living American dramatist, wrote *The Emperor Jones* (1921), *Anna Christie* (1922).

191. ground-bass: a few notes in the bass constantly repeated as an accompaniment to changing melodies.

adventitious: accidental.

192. "Out, out, brief candle!": Shak., *Macbeth*, V. v. 23.

193. Masfield: Poet Laureate since 1930.

194. Narrative poem . . . : cf. what Andrew Lang has to say on Scott's poems in a previous essay.

*Orfeo*: by Monteverde, *Carmen* by Bizet, *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo.

195. George Meredith: 1828-1909, his lyric poetry is likely to survive his novels; of the latter *The Egoist*, *Diana of the Crossways* and *Evan Harrington* are the most readable.

*Omar Khayyám*: the Persian poet translated by Edward Fitzgerald (1809-83) into a peculiarly apt and inimitable metrical form.

*The Shropshire Lad*: the simple yet severely classical lyrics of A. E. Housman (1859-1936), Regius Professor of Latin at Cambridge.

clichés: stereotyped phrases, worn out by constant use.

198. "expressionism": "subjective presentation accompanied by distortion to the point of unrecognizability"; explained below.

199. Gordon Craig: theatrical producer and designer of stage scenes, dresses, etc.; son of Ellen Terry.

"The Follies": famous for their burlesques; founded by Pélissier.

dialogue . . . : in his plays Galsworthy shows himself a master of stage dialogue—every word is significant.

201. tide in the affairs . . . : Shak., *Julius Cæsar*, IV. iii. 217.

## ON HUMOUR AND SATIRE

RONALD ARBUTHNOTT KNOX, b. 1888, who once perpetrated an elaborate leg-pull on the English listening public by broadcasting a circumstantial account of an imaginary revolution in London, is the author of several detective stories, a book on acrostics, a pungent satire *Absolute and Abitofhell*, and miscellaneous essays, *The Open Air Pulpit and Essays in Satire*, of which this essay forms the introduction.

205. Humperdinck: b. 1854, German musician, wrote *Hansel und Gretel* and the music to Reinhardt's production of *The Miracle*.

Bishop of Much Wenlock: an imaginary ecclesiastical dignity. M.W. is a quiet country town in Shropshire.

John Stuart Mill: see n. to p. 149.

206. Arnold Bennett: 1867-1931, novelist and playwright; *Riceman Steps*, one of his novels, is referred to on p. 184. He also wrote *How to Live on 24 Hours a Day*, *The Truth about an Author*, and other "up-to-date guides."

Meredith's *Egoist* . . . : see note to p. 195 and biographical note on Chesterton.

207. Latin . . . wit: because of its epigrammatic flavour and economy of expression.

thoughts . . . itself: cf. Wordsworth, *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, Stanza 11.

208. St. Thomas: Aquinas (1225-74), theologian, wrote *Summa Catholicæ Fidei*.

Demodocus: the bard who sang the amours of Ares (Mars) and Aphrodite (Venus) before Odysseus at the court of Alcinoüs. See *Odyssey*, VIII. 44.

Hephaestus: god of fire (Lat. Vulcanus).

209. Stock Exchange: Throgmorton Street, E.C., where they say doubtful jokes, as well as stocks and shares, are exchanged.

*Happy Thoughts*: by Sir F. C. Burnand, editor of *Punch* 1880-1916. *Diary of a Nobody* by George and Weedon Grossmith (1892) appeared originally in *Punch*. The Eliza books by Barry Pain (1865-1928).

210. David Hume: 1771-76, philosopher and economist.

Buckingham: the second duke, satirized by Samuel Butler in *Hudibras* (see n. to p. 162).

211. Merry Monarch: Charles II.

Richard Hurrell Froude: brother of J. A. Froude, the historian; one of the pioneers of the *Oxford Movement*.



Jane Austen: see n. to p. 71.

Calverley: Charles Stuart (1831-84), wrote ingenious parodies and scholarly and polished light verse. The *Ode to Tobacco* is his.

Aristophanes: 444-380 B.C., in his comedies burlesqued the prominent figures and notions of contemporary Athens. One, *The Birds*, is referred to later in this essay.

Petronius: committed suicide A.D. 66; was *Arbiter Elegantiarum* (director of pleasures) at Nero's court. Wrote *Cena Trimalchionis*—the dinner of T., a rich, vulgar upstart.

Sterne: Laurence (1713-68), author of *Tristram Shandy* and the *Sentimental Journey*. For Sheridan, see Hazlitt's essay and notes thereon.

Lucian: b. circa A.D. 120, wrote *Dialogues of the Dead*; Juvenal (A.D. 60-130), *Satires* (see reference later in this essay); Martial (b. A.D. 43), *Epigrams*; Thomas More (1478-1535), *Utopia*; Cervantes (1547-1616), *Don Quixote*; Rabelais (1494-1553), *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* (see n. to p. 27); Butler (1612-80), *Hudibras*; Molière (1622-73), *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; La Fontaine (1621-95), *Fables*; Swift (1667-1745), *Voyage to Lilliput*.

Hogarth: see n. to p. 49.

Barrie: Sir James (b. 1860), novelist and dramatist. Wrote *My Lady Nicotine* referred to later.

Milne: Alan Alexander (b. 1882), assistant editor of *Punch* 1906-14. Wrote *The Day's Play*, *The Holiday Round*, etc.

212. Herodotus: the "father of history" apparently gave equal credence to facts and myths.

*gratiae gratis datae*: services given for nothing.

Boswell: James (1740-95,) was blissfully unconscious of the poor figure he cuts in his *Life of Samuel Johnson*.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox: 1855-1919, had a singular felicity for turning platitudes into sickly verse.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain: 1855-1927, a renegade Englishman; married Wagner's daughter and became a naturalized German during the Great War.

Dean of St. Paul's: Dean Inge is referred to. He holds strong views on Eugenics.

Anatole France: 1844-1924, wrote many satires of which *L'Île des Pingouins* is one.

213. Hans Andersen: 1805-75. His fairy stories are well known.

215. Mark Twain: author of *A Tramp Abroad*; see n. to p. 184.

Artemus Ward: C. F. Browne (1834-67), American author of *Artemus Ward, His Book*, the chief humorous characteristic of which is the atrocious spelling.

"foreigner . . . pronounce": cf. the famous passage at the end of Chapter XIV of *Huckleberry Finn*.

Mr. Leacock: b. 1869, Professor of Economics and Political Science at Montreal; author of *Literary Lapses*, *Nonsense Novels*, *Frenzied Fiction*, etc.

Lowell: James Russell (1819-91), wrote *The Biglow Papers*

216. St. Philip Neri: 1515-95, established a brotherhood for poor pilgrims visiting Rome.

Mr. Winkle: in *Pickwick Papers*, Chapter VII.

Mr. Bumble: in *Oliver Twist*, see n. to p. 149.

217. Mr. P. G. Wodehouse: b. 1881, has written a number of amusing stories about the incomparable butler *Jeeves*.

218. city in the clouds: Nephelococcygia = Cloud Cuckoo Town.  
Dean of St. Patrick's: Swift, see n. above.

220. *Lanchester Tradition*: by G. F. Bradby (b. 1863), author of *Dick* and *The Chronicles of Dawnhope*, two other amusing school stories.

*Facit . . . versum*: "indignation gives rise to verse"; a quotation from Juvenal (see n. above).

Simonides: c. 664 B.C., wrote iambs.

222. *John Bull*: a popular weekly edited in pre-war days by Horatio Bottomley.

Sir W. S. Gilbert: 1836-1911, author of *Bab Ballads* and the librettos of many light and comic operas, including *Patience*, in which he ridicules the æsthetic movement of the '80's—their sentimental archaizing, affected speech and eccentric dress and manners.

W. H. Mallock: 1849-1923, author of *The New Republic*.

Mr. Belloc: a versatile and prolific writer of poetry, novels, essays, historical monographs, etc. He was closely associated with Mr. Chesterton in his efforts to popularize *Distributism*.

223. O. Henry: William Sydney Porter (d. 1910), the famous American short story writer.

Heath Robinson: a contemporary cartoonist.

*Bongaultier Ballads*: parodies by Sir Theodore Martin and W. E. Aytoun; published 1845.

*Voces Populi*: by F. Anstey (T. A. Guthrie), 1856-1934, author of *Vice Versa*.

224. *Press Cuttings*: a political satire in which many contemporary politicians were presented under very thin disguises.

## AN ANCIENT HOLIDAY

EDMUND BLUNDEN, b. 1896, is first and foremost a poet; and he has done great service to poetry as a critic, and as the discoverer of the Victorian poet, John Clare. His essays are *Votive Tablets* and *The Face of England*, the latter an attempt "to show the face of England in a working, speaking, familiar likeness."

228. "clay . . . dignity": see Shak., *Cymbeline*, IV. ii. The correct quotation is "clay and clay . . ."

Malapropism: the kind of error (including misquotation) made by Mrs. Malaprop in Sheridan's *Rivals*.

230. Wisdenite: a reader of *Wisden*, the cricketers' annual.

237. *explicit*: a Latin word used to indicate the end of a book.

